

Competing Budget Priorities

The Public, The House, The White House

**A Study by the Program for Public Consultation and
Knowledge Networks**

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**THE PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION IS A JOINT PROGRAM OF
THE CENTER ON POLICY ATTITUDES
AND THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

The Program for Public Consultation seeks to improve democratic governance by helping governments consult their citizenry on the key public policy issues the government faces. Unlike standard polls, in public consultations respondents are presented information that helps simulate the issues and tradeoffs faced by policymakers. PPC has been established to develop the methods and theory of public consultation and to conduct public consultations. PPC is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland

The Center on Policy Attitudes (COPA) was established in 1992 with the purpose of giving public opinion a greater voice in the public policy process. COPA conducts in-depth studies of public opinion that include polls, focus groups and interviews. It integrates its findings together with those of other organizations. In addition to PPC, COPA has a joint program with the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland called the Program on International Policy Attitudes.

School of Public Policy, University of Maryland (College Park) is one of the nation's leading graduate programs devoted to the study of public policy, management and international affairs. It is the only policy school in the Washington area that is embedded in a major research university and combines both domestic and international policy studies under one roof.

Knowledge Networks is a polling, social science, and market research firm based in Menlo Park, California. Knowledge Networks uses a large-scale nationwide research panel which is randomly selected from the national population of households having telephones and is subsequently provided internet access for the completion of surveys (and thus is not limited to those who already have internet access).

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OVERVIEW

The issue of the federal budget deficit is occupying center stage in American politics today. Criticisms of the Obama administration's approach to the budget were prominent in the 2010 Congressional elections and some believe this issue played a key role in the large gains the Republicans made. Confrontations over the budget are rife: Congress did not succeed in passing a budget for 2011, and, as of this writing, the government is kept open through continuing resolutions that keep 2010 appropriations circulating through the system.

At the end of 2010 multiple reports were issued, among others by the president's own Fiscal Commission, to propose long-term road maps to dealing with the deficit. Though these reports were greeted with a fair amount of interest, it is at best unclear whether what they have to say has impacted the budget process.

President Obama's 2012 budget proposal did put forward some steps to address the budget deficit. He offers a five-year freeze on non-security discretionary spending, while allowing security-related spending—about two thirds of the discretionary budget—to rise. Within non-security spending, some areas are cut to provide funds for other areas where the administration sees investment as an urgent priority. While the President did push to terminate the Bush-era tax cuts for those in the upper income tax brackets, he ultimately agreed to extend all of the tax cuts another two years.

The House of Representatives, buoyed by a crop of freshman Republicans who believe that the election was a mandate for budget cutting, has taken the unusual step of passing a substantial package of cuts to the current fiscal year. These cuts amount to \$61 billion.

But what does the public really think about these various budget developments? Existing poll questions are not really adequate to answer this question. When the public is asked about the budget most people express their displeasure with the idea of cutting spending in most areas, their displeasure with the idea of raising taxes, as well their belief that it would be desirable to balance the budget. This creates the impression that the public is simply a mass of contradictory feelings.

Consistent with the purposes of the Program for Public Consultation, this study sought to find out what would happen if Americans were to actually sit down and be presented the federal budget and given the opportunity to make choices and tradeoffs. What then would Americans do?

The Public Study

To this end, the Program for Public Consultation worked with staff of the President's Fiscal Commission to develop a budget process. The goal was to make the process accurate, but also simple enough for people to grasp. The goal was also to break budget items down in ways that they would find engaging in terms of their values. As for the Fiscal Commission and other deficit commissions, the focus was on the year 2015.

This study was done and reported on previously in some detail. (See http://www.public-consultation.org/studies/budget_feb11.html) It included not only the discretionary budget and general revenues being discussed here, but also Social Security and Medicare.

For the part of the study that dealt with the discretionary budget, this budget was divided into 31 line items. Respondents were presented this budget and allowed to decrease or increase each line item as they saw fit, getting constant feedback on the effect of their decisions on the deficit.

They were then presented a series of options for modifying general revenues. These included modifying existing taxes including individual income taxes, corporate income taxes, the estate tax, alcohol taxes, and the tax on carried interest; as well as the possibility of instituting new taxes on carbon emissions, sugary drinks, and on sales (essentially a Value Added Tax). This list of possible revenue sources and the options presented for each source were largely determined by which options we were able to get scored--i.e., to quantify the effect of the option on federal revenues in 2015.

Naturally, the best method for dealing with this budget process was not to conduct a telephone survey, but to present the process over the internet so that respondents could see the interconnection between the different elements of the budgeting process and take as much time as they needed to develop their own budget. We worked with KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have internet access, Knowledge Networks provides a laptop and ISP connection. More technical information is available at <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/reviewer-info.html>. This part of the study was conducted over December 18-29, 2010 with a sample of 793 respondents, giving a margin of error of +/- 3.5%.

The Comparative Analysis

In the current study we have sought to take the results of the study on the public's budget preferences and see how these compare with the budget priorities in the administration's proposed 2012 budget and the House's proposed changes to the 2011 budget.

The public, the administration, and the House were all cutting, maintaining, or increasing relative to a baseline, but these baselines were not identical. The analysis of the administration's 2012 budget and House's proposed changes are relative to 2011 spending, as appropriated in 2010 and maintained through a continuing resolution. The public was asked to do what the Fiscal Commission did and think in terms of the year 2015. The public's baseline was the Office of Management and Budget's projections for 2015 (as reported in 2011).

While these do not make a perfect comparison, the distribution of spending on programs for the 2011 and 2015 budgets are very similar. The biggest changes are due to adjustments for inflation. Thus our analysis focuses mostly on percentage changes relative to the baseline, rather than dollar amounts.

The key findings of the comparative analysis were:

1. Security Spending

In dollar terms, the largest discrepancy between any of the groups is that the public made deep cuts in basic defense spending, while the Obama administration and the House make slight increases. The public also made a deep cut to intelligence, while the administration only provides for a slowing of the increase. The public made a slight cut to nuclear weapons spending, while the administration makes substantial increases (as required by the agreement with the Senate over ratification of the START treaty). For Homeland Security, the public made a modest cut while the administration keeps it flat 5

2. Energy and the Environment

The public doubled spending for energy conservation and renewable energy; the administration increases it by nearly half, while the House bill cuts funding. The House makes a deep cut to the Environmental Protection Agency while the administration makes a modest cut; the public, however, made a modest increase in spending on pollution control..... 6

3. Job Training and Education

Job training and higher education are areas of major disagreement. The public more than doubled spending on job training, the administration trims it lightly and the House cuts it by half. The public nearly doubled spending to higher education, the administration makes a substantial increase, while the House cuts it by a quarter. For K-12 and special education the public made modest increases, the administration makes a small increase and the House makes small cuts. 7

4. Space, Science, and Medical Research

The public would cut the space program and trim medical research but increase funding for basic and applied science research. The administration also increases science funding, but leaves space and medical research largely the same. The House bill modestly cuts science and medical research, but not space..... 8

5. International Aid Programs

On foreign aid, the public made substantial cuts to forms of aid that serve strategic ends such as military aid, but not aid that serves altruistic ends. The administration is roughly similar to the public on altruistic aid, but makes only slight cuts to strategic forms of aid. The House cuts all forms of aid except military aid. 9

6. Transportation

While the administration is calling for large scale increases to federal spending in highways, air travel and roads and mass transit, the House makes a deep cut to mass transit. The public, meanwhile, made modest cuts to highways and air travel and roads, but left mass transit essentially unchanged..... 10

7. International Affairs

For the State Department, the public made a significant cut, while the House makes a slight cut and the administration a slight increase. For international organizations, the House makes a significant cut, the administration a slight cut and the public a very slight cut..... 10

8. Agricultural Subsidies

Both the public and the administration would make a deep cut to subsidies that go mostly to large corporate agriculture. However, the public would redirect much of these funds to small farmers. The House makes no change to agricultural subsidies.....11

9. Veterans' Benefits

The public made a cut to veterans' benefits that was modest in percentage terms but substantial in dollar terms. The administration, however, makes a major increase to veterans' benefits. The House leaves them basically unchanged.12

10. Revenues

The public called for substantial increases in revenues totaling \$292 billion, with 155 billion coming from increase on income taxes primarily from those with income over \$100,000. The Obama administration favors terminating the Bush-era tax cuts for with incomes over \$250,000, which would generate \$97 billion in revenues in 2015. The House calls for no increases in tax revenues.12

11. Other Spending Areas

For land management, housing, and the federal administration of justice, the public either made small cuts or kept spending levels the same. The House makes sharper cuts to all three. The administration substantially makes only minor changes, except for substantially increasing spending on prisons.13

12. Net Changes to Deficit

In aggregate, the public's average changes to spending and revenues resulted in a deep deficit reduction of \$437 billion for 2015. The administration's budget for 2012 is a slight increase over the previous year, though it would have had a net reduction of \$28 billion if it had succeeded in terminating the Bush-era tax cuts for upper incomes. As the House made no increases in revenues, its call for \$61 billion in cuts is the total of if its reduction to the deficit.13

FINDINGS

1. Security Spending

In dollar terms, the largest discrepancy between any of the groups is that the public made deep cuts in basic defense spending, while the Obama administration and the House make slight increases. The public also made a deep cut to intelligence, while the administration only provides for a slowing of the increase. The public made a slight cut to nuclear weapons spending, while the administration makes substantial increases (as required by the agreement with the Senate over ratification of the START treaty). For Homeland Security, the public made a modest cut while the administration keeps it flat.

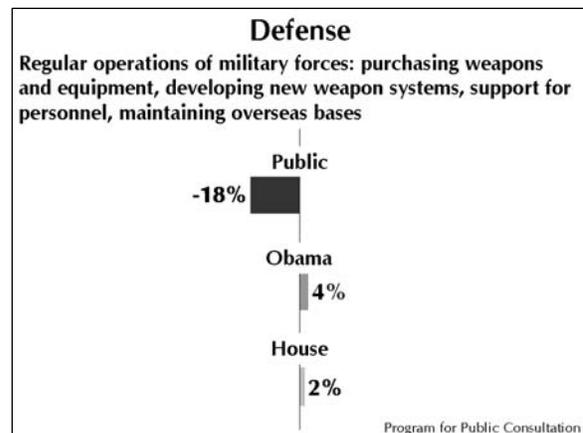
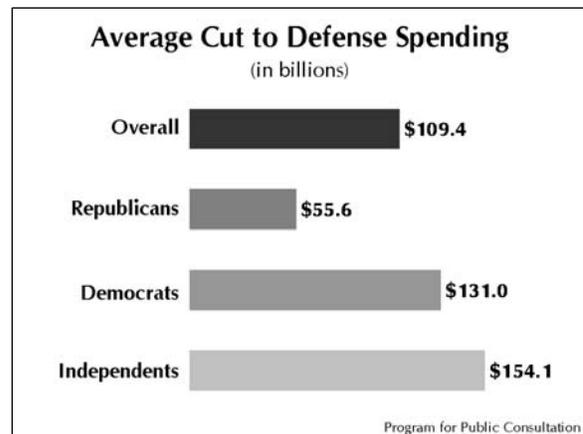
The public found the lion's share of its deficit reductions by cutting security-related spending, and in this it differed sharply from both the president's proposal and the House bill.

On average, the public cut basic defense spending by 18%. In dollar terms this was by far the biggest cut—\$109.4 billion. Defense was cut substantially by all partisan groups as well, though there was substantial variation in the average amounts: independents \$154.1 billion, Democrats \$131 billion, Republicans \$55.6 billion.

By contrast, the president's proposal increases defense by 4% (\$23 billion more than for 2011) and the House of Representatives increases it 2% (\$9 billion more).

The administration's Office of Management and Budget has also increased projections for defense spending in the out years—raising the previous year's projection for 2015 from \$601 billion (the amount to which the public responded) up to \$650 billion.¹

For intelligence agencies, the public cuts 15%; these were all cut by Republicans, Democrats and independents in varying amounts (with independents cutting most deeply). The intelligence agencies' budgets are kept secret; however, the proposal's narrative conveys that these budgets would grow at a slower pace.



¹ In general, administration figures in tables that project spending for a ten-year period are inflation-adjusted, but changes that are from one year to the next are not inflation-adjusted. For example, as the OMB noted in its 2011 summary tables, "The administration conceives of discretionary growth rates in inflation-adjusted terms... This statement does not apply to funding growth between 2010 and the 2011 budget year, since the appropriations process for 2011 must begin immediately and before inflation assumptions will be revisited." Thus the 2012 budget proposal is not inflation adjusted relative to continuing spending that was enacted in 2010; but the 2015 projections that this study's sample saw in the budget exercise were inflation-adjusted.

For the Energy Department’s nuclear weapons budget, the public makes a slight cut of 4%. However for the administration’s budget, this goes up by 16%; this was part of the bargain that resulted in the December Senate passage of the START treaty with Russia.

For military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the public makes cuts of 26%. While the administration’s funding for Afghanistan and Iraq operations would come down 25%, this is entirely due to executing the planned Iraq drawdown.

For the public homeland security was cut modestly by 5%; Democrats and independents cut on average while Republicans increased it. The president’s proposal keeps homeland security spending almost flat, increasing it by just 1%. The House bill made approximately \$1 billion in cuts to homeland security, a 2% reduction—which is interesting, since Republicans in the exercise increased this area. Thus there is some rough agreement across the public, the president’s proposal, and the House to at least rein in homeland security spending.

2. Energy and the Environment

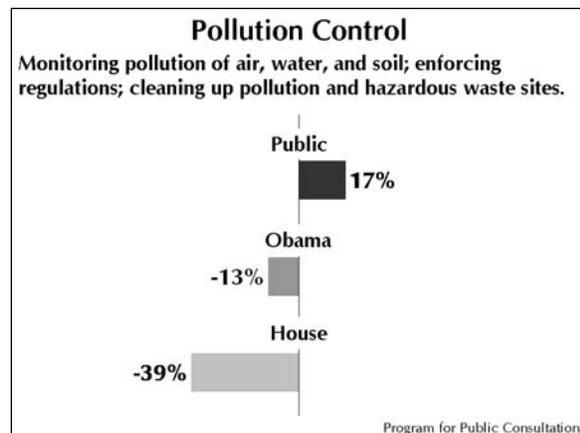
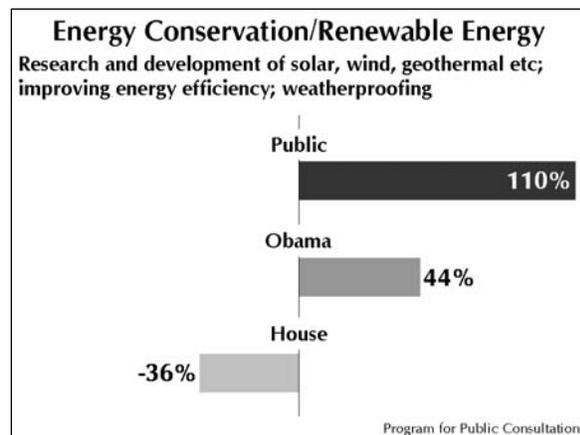
The public doubled spending for energy conservation and renewable energy; the administration increases it by nearly half, while the House bill cuts funding. The House makes a deep cut to the Environmental Protection Agency while the administration makes a modest cut; the public, however, made a modest increase in spending on pollution control.

The public has strong views on pushing forward the development of solar, wind, geothermal and other renewable energies and improving energy efficiency. On average, funding for this area was increased 110%. Republicans, Democrats and independents all increased it on average.

By comparison, the president’s proposal also makes a major increase to spending on developing renewable energy and efficiency, but by a lesser 44%. The House bill, on the other hand makes a deep cut of 36%, specifically from the Department of Energy’s work on renewables and efficiency.

The House bill cuts current funding to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deeply-- by 39%, while in the president’s 2012 proposal, the EPA’s budget would be cut by 13%.

However, the public increased spending on pollution control (i.e., the work of the Environmental Protection Agency), by an average of 17%. On average Republicans, Democrats and independents all increased it.



3. Job Training and Education

Job training and higher education are areas of major disagreement. The public more than doubled spending on job training, the administration trims it lightly and the House cuts it by half. The public nearly doubled spending to higher education, the administration makes a substantial increase, while the House cuts it by a quarter. For K-12 and special education the public made modest increases, the administration makes a small increase and the House makes small cuts.

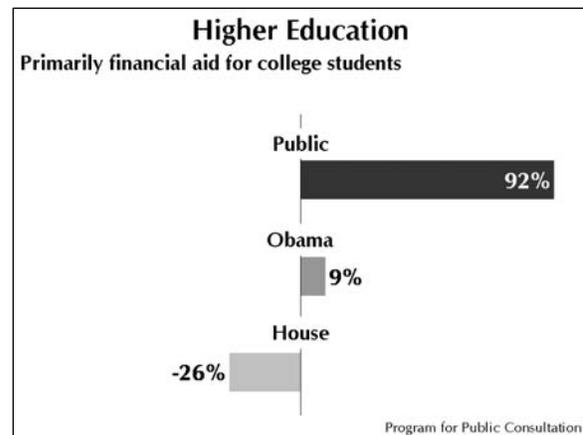
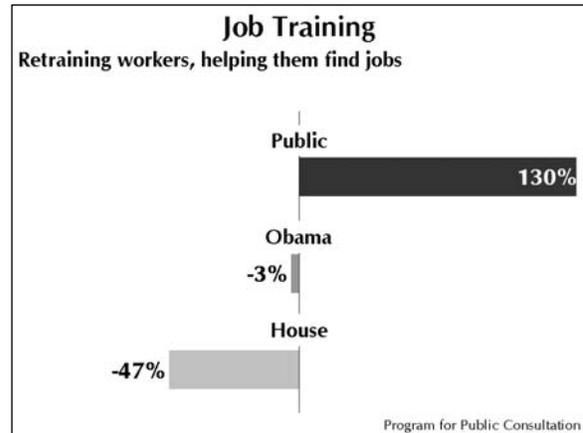
In the exercise, job training and aid in finding employment—programs administered by the Labor Department—the public increased an average of 130%. This was true of Republicans, Democrats and independents.

In the president’s 2012 proposal, job training programs were trimmed by 3%. The House bill cut these programs by a striking 47%.

The public nearly doubled spending in higher education (92%), while the administration increased it 9%, and the House made a deep cut of 26%. (It should be noted that Pell grants—a complex program that was a moving target at the time of the exercise—was not included in the exercise’s discretionary spending.)

The public made more modest increases to K-12 education funding (9%) and special education for students with disabilities (10%). The president’s proposal made modest increases—K-12 education funding by 6% and special education by 2%--while the House bill decreased both areas, with K-12 education cut 5%, special education cut 4%,

Among the public, Republicans, Democrats and independents each on average increased spending in all three education areas.



4. Space, Science, and Medical Research

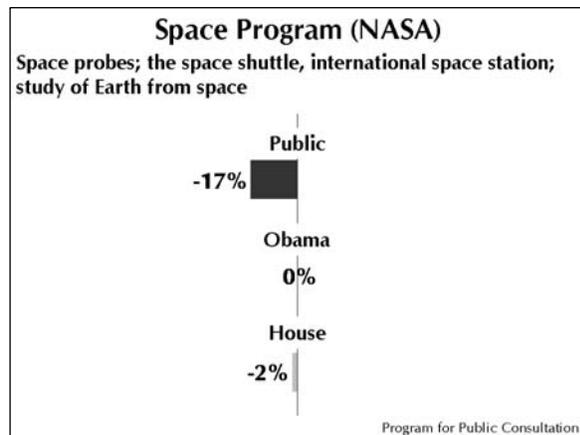
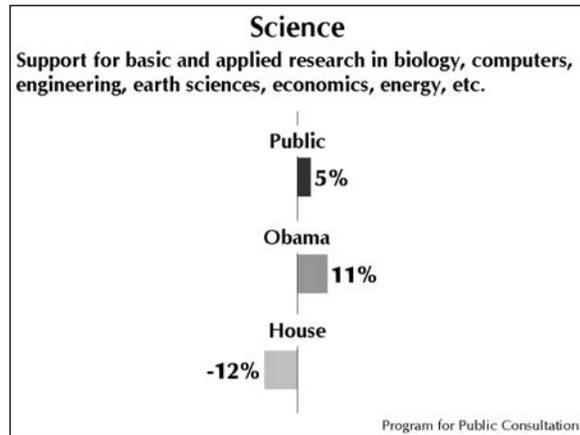
The public would cut the space program and trim medical research but increase funding for basic and applied science research. The administration also increases science funding, but leaves space and medical research largely the same. The House bill modestly cuts science and medical research, but not space.

The public on average increased the science budget for basic and applied research in a wide variety of fields by 5%. However, it did not hold all scientific programs immune from cuts. It significantly cut NASA’s budget by 17%, and it reined in spending on medical research with a 7% cut. Interestingly, the increase in the science budget was driven by independents, who were the only group to increase it on average. Republicans, Democrats and independents, on average, all made cuts in the space program and medical research. For the science budget, both Republicans and Democrats trimmed it less than 3%, but independents increased it 29%.

The president’s proposal increases the National Science Foundation’s budget by a strong 13% and basic research in the Energy Department by 8%. It does not cut NASA’s budget, but it does keep it flat. And while it increases funding for medical research, this is by a slim 2%.

The House bill cuts science research by 12% and medical research by 6% (similar to the public’s average in the exercise), but only trims NASA by 2%,

Thus in this area the public is somewhere between the White House and the House of Representatives. The public on average is closer to the administration in increasing the budget for basic and applied research, but is more like the House in its willingness to make cuts to space science and medical research.



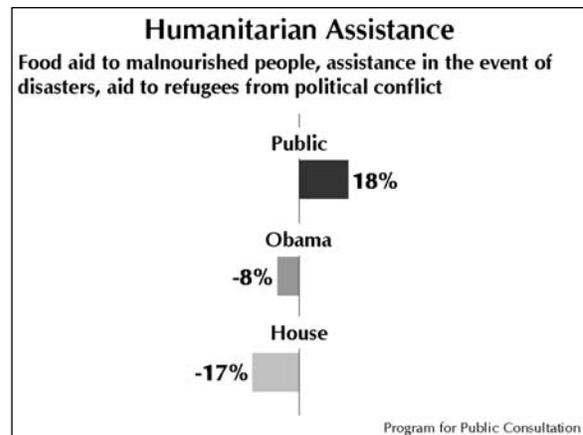
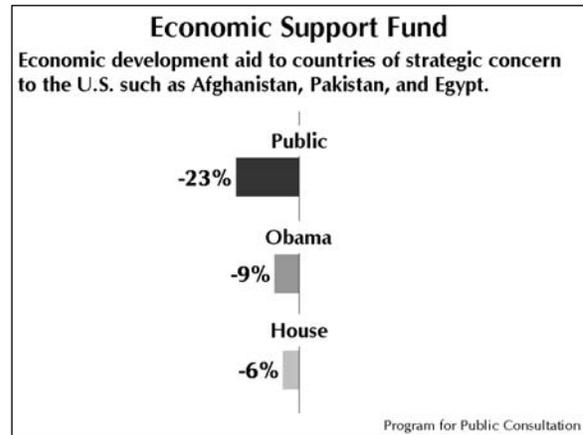
5. International Aid Programs

On foreign aid, the public made substantial cuts to forms of aid that serve strategic ends such as military aid, but not aid that serves altruistic ends. The administration is roughly similar to the public on altruistic aid, but makes only slight cuts to strategic forms of aid. The House cuts all forms of aid except military aid.

The public cut spending for foreign aid that is meant to serve strategic purposes. Aid to countries “of strategic concern to the U.S. such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt,” known as the Economic Support Fund, was cut a substantial 23%, while military aid was cut 15%. Both programs were cut by Republicans, Democrats and independents, on average.

The administration’s proposal would cut the Economic Support Fund 9%, while the House bill cut it 6%. Neither made significant cuts to military aid, however.

For more altruistic forms of aid, the public was presented relatively higher amounts for 2015--based on the president’s plan to significantly increase spending in these areas. Nonetheless, overall the public made little change though they shifted funds around—increasing humanitarian aid by 18%, cutting development assistance 14% and leaving spending on global health essentially unchanged. Republicans, Democrats and independents alike increased humanitarian assistance. Global health was cut by Republicans only. All three groups agreed on trimming development assistance.



In the president’s 2012 proposal, humanitarian assistance funding is cut 8%, while funding for global health gets an increase (11%) and so does development assistance (12%).

In the House bill, humanitarian assistance is cut significantly, by 16.5%. The bill also cuts global health programs by 6%. Development assistance is sharply cut (18%), including cuts to the Peace Corps and to the Millennium Challenge Corporation (which was established under President George W. Bush).

Overall, the public tends to make sharper distinctions between altruistic and more strategic aid than do either the president’s proposal or the House bill. The public is in clear agreement with the administration and the House on cutting the Economic Support Fund, with the public cutting it the most. The public disagrees just as clearly with the House on humanitarian assistance. The public is alone in seeking a reduction in military aid.

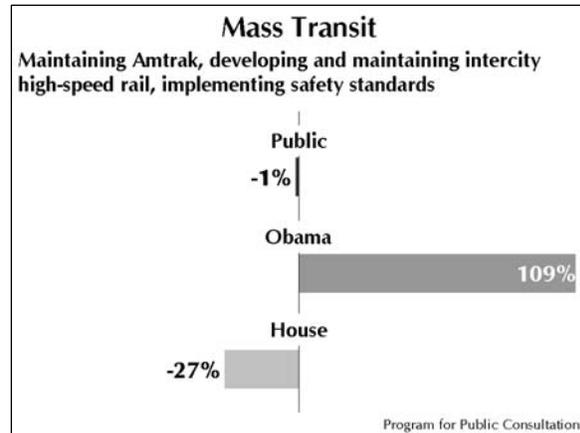
6. Transportation

While the administration is calling for large scale increases to federal spending in highways, air travel and roads and mass transit, the House makes a deep cut to mass transit. The public, meanwhile, made modest cuts to highways and air travel and roads, but left mass transit essentially unchanged.

The president’s proposal harbors strong ambitions for transportation, with 2012 spending on highway infrastructure rising 53% and on air travel and railroads going up 36%. The mass transit area would double, with notable investments in a long-term program for intercity high-speed rail.

The House bill made cuts in the Federal Highway Administration’s current spending amounting to 2%, and made a 1% cut for current infrastructure spending on air travel and railroads. It made, however, a deep cut in mass transit--27%, affecting both Amtrak and the high-speed rail program.

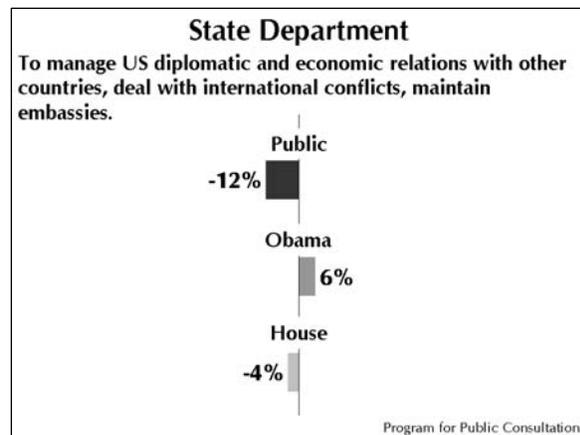
The public seems to be in the middle between the White House and the House of Representatives where transportation is concerned. The public makes modest cuts to highways (9%) and air travel and roads (7%), but leaves mass transit essentially unchanged.



7. International Affairs

For the State Department, the public made a significant cut, while the House makes a slight cut and the administration a slight increase. For international organizations, the House makes a significant cut, the administration a slight cut and the public a very slight cut.

The public on average made cuts to both the State Department and US contributions to international organizations, but cuts to the former went deeper than cuts to the latter. The State Department’s budget was cut 12%, while international organizations (including the UN, UN peacekeeping, the World Health Organization, nuclear non-proliferation programs and others) were cut 2.5%. The State Department was cut by Republicans, Democrats and independents; however, only Republicans, on average, cut funds to international organizations.



In the president's proposal, the State Department's budget gets a light increase of 6%. Funding to international organizations is trimmed by 7%. In the House bill, the State Department is cut 4%. The bill also sets cuts for various international organizations, UN peacekeeping, and non-proliferation efforts that amount to a 13% reduction.

The public is apparently more in agreement with the House bill than with the administration where State Department funding is concerned. However, the public discriminates rather sharply between State and international organizations, cutting the first more than the second. The public is distinctly more supportive of international organizations than is the House.



8. Agricultural Subsidies

Both the public and the administration would make a deep cut to subsidies that go mostly to large corporate agriculture. However, the public would redirect much of these funds to small farmers. The House makes no change to agricultural subsidies.

The public reduced subsidies to large farming corporations by 21%. The public, however, redirected most of these savings (\$2.0 out of \$2.3 billion) to subsidies for small farmers, giving them a major increase.

The Obama administration proposes to cut by 19% programs that mostly go to corporations, which constitute most of the subsidies to large farms.

The House did not propose any changes to agricultural subsidies. However, it did make scattered cuts to programs to help small rural communities in decline.

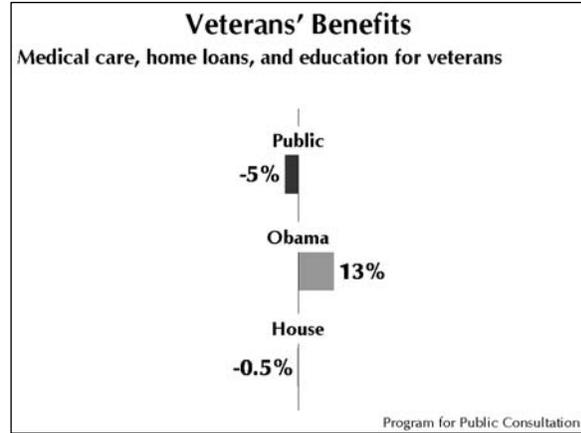
Republicans, Democrats, and independents all on average cut subsidies to agricultural corporations, with Republicans cutting the most. Likewise, all three groups increased subsidies to small farmers, with Republicans increasing the most.

9. Veterans' Benefits

The public made a cut to veterans' benefits that was modest in percentage terms but substantial in dollar terms. The administration, however, makes a major increase to veterans' benefits. The House leaves them basically unchanged.

The public made a modest average cut of 5% to veterans' benefits. However, because veterans' benefits are such a large line item, in dollar terms, this was one of their largest cuts—\$6.7 billion. Republicans, Democrats and independents all on average cut this area, with independents cutting the most, followed by Democrats and Republicans.

The administration made a very large increase to veterans' benefits of 13% or \$16 billion for 2012. It should be noted this is at least in part a response to current need as service members demobilize, which the public was not asked to consider.

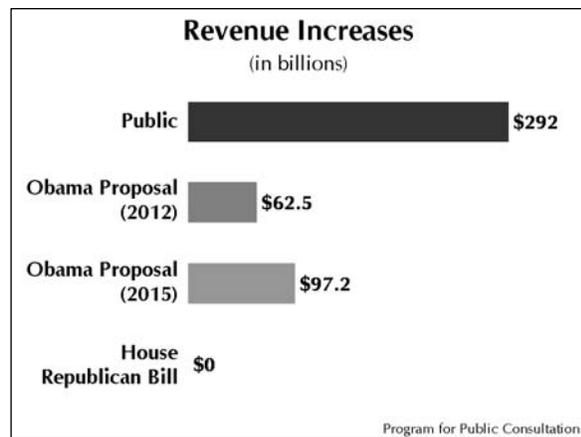


The House left these benefits largely unchanged—nicking them a slight half a percent.

10. Revenues

The public called for substantial increases in revenues totaling \$292 billion, with 155 billion coming from increase on income taxes primarily from those with income over \$100,000. The Obama administration favors terminating the Bush-era tax cuts for with incomes over \$250,000, which would generate \$97 billion in revenues in 2015. The House calls for no increases in tax revenues.

On average, respondents increased revenues by \$292 billion in the exercise. The largest portion was from income taxes, which were raised by an average of \$154.8 billion above the levels currently in place. A plurality favored increases of 5% or more on those with income of \$75-\$100,000. Majorities increased taxes on incomes over \$100,000 by 5% or more, and increased them by 10% or more for incomes over \$500,000.



Majorities also made increases in corporate taxes and alcohol taxes as well as new sources of revenue, including a tax on sugary drinks, treating 'carried interest' income as ordinary income (also known as the hedge fund managers' tax), and charging a crisis fee to large banks. A plurality (49%) favored a tax on carbon dioxide emissions. But a sales tax was rejected by 58% of respondents.

For the estate tax, a majority (77%) favored reverting at least to the 2009 levels, taxing estates over \$3.5 million at a maximum 45% rate. Only 15% of respondents supported the estate tax levels recently passed: taxing estates over \$5 million at a maximum 35% rate.

The Obama administration holds to its position that the Bush era-tax cuts for incomes above \$250,000 should be allowed to expire, and now proposes this for after 2012. For 2012 this would have generated \$62.5 billion and by 2015 this would generate \$97.2 billion in revenues.

The administration would also pay for the Alternative Minimum Tax patch for three years by an across-the-board 30% reduction in itemized deductions for high-income taxpayers, but it is not clear that this would generate any revenue. In addition, it invites Congress to work with it on corporate tax reform--but the assumption is that the outcome would be revenue-neutral.

The House leadership has so far not made any proposal regarding tax revenues that could decrease the budget deficit.

11. Other Spending Areas

For land management, housing, and the federal administration of justice, the public either made small cuts or kept spending levels the same. The House makes sharper cuts to all three. The administration substantially makes only minor changes, except for substantially increasing spending on prisons.

For land management in the Department of the Interior, the public made a light cut of 6% while the Obama administration kept spending the same. The House made a sharper cut of 13%.

On housing programs, the public on average kept funding stable (increasing it 0.4%); only Democrats increased housing programs in the exercise. On the other hand, both the White House and the House bill found cuts to make in this area. The president's proposal reduces funding by 2.5%, while the House bill cuts it a deeper 12%.

Finally the federal administration of justice was an area where the public kept spending stable, cutting the budget for enforcement of federal laws by 1% and increasing funds for the federal prison system by 1%. The administration likewise keeps spending flat on enforcement, but gave the prison system a 9% increase. The House bill cuts law enforcement by 7% and made no change in prison system funding.

12. Net Changes to Deficit

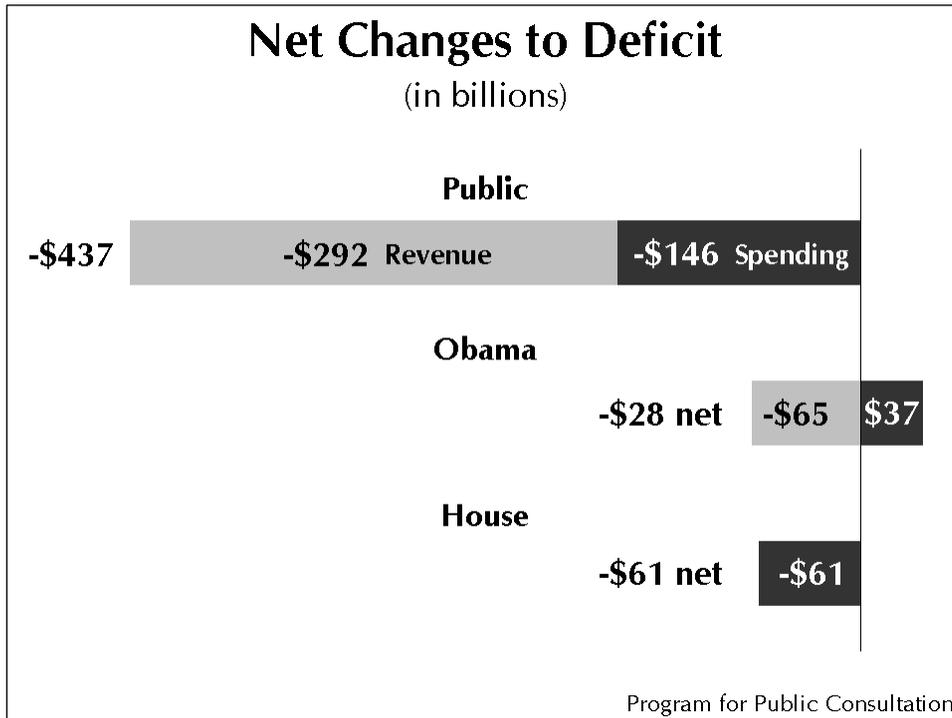
In aggregate, the public's average changes to spending and revenues resulted in a deep deficit reduction of \$437 billion for 2015. The administration's budget for 2012 is a slight increase over the previous year, though it would have had a net reduction of \$28 billion if it had succeeded in terminating the Bush-era tax cuts for upper incomes. As the House made no increases in revenues, its call for \$61 billion in cuts is the total of if its reduction to the deficit.

On average the public called for spending cuts of \$168.7 billion, while making increases of \$23 billion, thus producing a net reduction of \$145.7 billion in spending with most of this arising from cuts in security-related spending. On the revenue side they generated a \$291.6 billion increase in revenue. Thus, overall they reduced the projected deficit for 2015 by a total of approximately \$437 billion.

The 2012 Obama budget generates \$29 billion in non-security discretionary spending cuts relative to 2011, but because the administration calls for a \$66 billion increase in security spending, the net

effect is an increase in spending of \$37 billion. If the Bush-era tax cuts for those with higher incomes had been allowed to expire in full as Obama has called for this would have generated \$65 billion for 2012, for a net reduction of \$28 billion. Relative to 2015 (the year the public considered in the exercise), this would raise \$135 billion.²

The House bill calls for \$61 billion in spending cuts to the FY 2011 budget. No increases in revenue were called for.



² These figures are reported by the Tax Policy Center and based on estimates by the Treasury Department. See <http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/numbers/displayatab.cfm?DocID=2785>

	Public's Preference (2015 baseline)	Obama 2012 Proposal (2011 Baseline)	House Republican Bill (2011 Baseline)
Q1. Transportation:			
Q1a. Highways	-9%	+53%	-2%
Q1b. Air travel and railroads	-7%	+36%	-1%
Q1c. Mass transit	-1%	+109%	-27%
Q2. Federal Administration of Justice			
Q2a. Enforcement of federal laws (FBI, ATF)	-1%	Flat	-7%
Q2b. Federal prison system	+1%	+9%	N/A
Q3. Space Program (NASA)	-17%	Flat	-2%
Q4. Science	+5%	+11%	-12%
Q5. Medical research	-7%	+2%	-6%
Q6. International Aid Programs			
Q6a. Humanitarian assistance	18%	-8%	-17%
Q6b. Development assistance	-14%	+12%	-18%
Q6c. Global Health	-2%	+11%	-6%
Q6d. Economic Support Fund	-23%	-9%	-6%
Q6e. Military Aid	-15%	+1%	N/A
Q7. State Department	-12%	+6%	-4%
Q8. International Organizations	-3%	-7%	-13%
Q9. Environment and natural resources			
Q9a. Land management	-6%	Flat	-13%
Q9b. Pollution control	17%	-13%	-39%
Q10. Housing Programs	Flat	-3%	-12%
Q11. Homeland Security	-5%	+1%	-2%
Q12. Veterans' Benefits	-5%	+13%	-0.50%
Q13. Job training	130%	-3%	-47%
Q14. Energy Conservation/Renewable Energy	110%	+44%	-36%
Q15. Education			
Q15a. Elementary and secondary education	9%	+6%	-5%
Q15b. Special education	10%	+2%	-4%
Q15c. Higher education	92%	+9%	-26%
Q16. Agriculture Subsidies			
Q16a. Subsidies to small farmers	67%	N/A	N/A
Q16b. Subsidies to corporations with large farms	-21%	-19% approx.	Flat
Q17. Defense			
Q17a. Regular operations of military forces	-18%	+4%	+2%
Q17b. Military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq	-26%	-25%	N/A
Q17c. Intelligence agencies	-15%	Unknown	N/A
Q17d. Nuclear weapons	-4%	+16%	N/A

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