

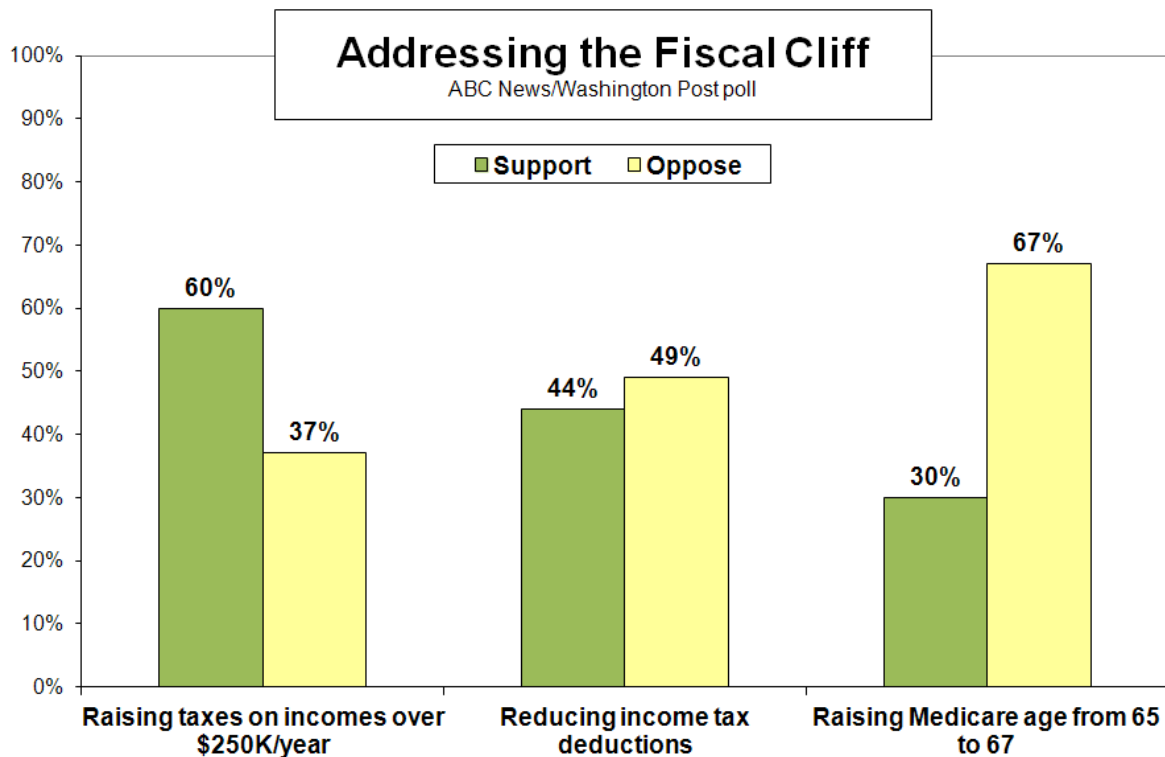
Among Cliff-Avoidance Options, Most Favor Targeting the Wealthy

With the fiscal cliff drawing closer, raising taxes on wealthy Americans remains a popular option. While the public divides closely on reducing federal income tax deductions, two-thirds oppose another possibility, raising the age for Medicare eligibility.

Sixty percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll support raising taxes on incomes more than \$250,000 a year, long a popular option overall, but also a divisive one: While 73 percent of Democrats and 63 percent of independents are in favor, far fewer Republicans, 39 percent, agree.

Notably, “strong” support for raising taxes on the well-off is nearly double strong opposition, 42 vs. 23 percent. That’s because 57 percent of Democrats are strongly in favor, as are 42 percent of independents, vs. just 22 percent of Republicans.

While well short of a majority, support for a tax increase among four in 10 Republicans may provide some wiggle room to Republican leaders seeking compromise. Some, notably, have indicated a willingness to back off from the no-tax pledge many have taken.



Results of this poll echo the national exit poll in the presidential election, in which, given other options, 40 percent of Mitt Romney’s supporters favored raising taxes either on the wealthy (28 percent) or on all Americans (12 percent). That rose to 79 percent among Obama’s supporters – 66 percent favoring a tax hike on the well-off, 13 percent on everyone.

DEDUCT – Americans divide on another item on the table, reducing income-tax deductions. In a question testing the concept generally – that is, without suggesting that wealthier Americans would be harder hit – 49 percent oppose limiting deductions, while 44 percent are in favor. On this option, strong opposition exceeds strong support, although intensity isn’t high on either side, 28 vs. 20 percent.

	----- Raising taxes on \$250K-plus	Support-Oppose Reducing tax deductions	----- Raising Medicare age
All	60-37%	44-49	30-67
Democrats	73-26	45-49	27-71
Republicans	39-59	39-51	30-68
Independents	63-33	45-48	34-62
Liberals	74-24	48-46	30-68
Moderates	65-32	47-46	32-65
Conservatives NET	47-51	41-54	30-68
Somewhat cons	49-48	35-60	31-67
Very cons	45-55	50-46	29-70
Less than \$50K	64-34	46-47	25-72
\$50-100K	60-37	44-53	32-68
\$100K-plus	57-42	38-58	40-59

Partisan divisions on this question are less pronounced than they are on a tax hike for the better-off: Support ranges from 45 percent of Democrats and independents to 39 percent of Republicans; opposition, 48 to 51 percent across these groups. “Strong” opposition, likewise, is similar across partisan groups, 26 to 30 percent.

Openness to raising taxes on higher-income Americans suggests that views on limiting deductions might gain popularity to the extent that this approach, too, is targeted at the wealthy. Indeed, opposition to limiting deductions peaks at 58 percent among \$100,000-plus income earners, vs. 47 percent among those with household incomes less than \$50,000.

MEDICARE – Sixty-seven percent in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), oppose another suggestion, raising the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67. And on this idea, strong opposition surpasses strong support by more than 3-1, 49 to 14 percent.

Opposition to increasing the Medicare eligibility age crosses partisan and ideological lines; it’s 68 percent or more among Democrats and Republicans and liberals and conservatives alike. Instead views relate to age; opposition peaks at 78 percent among adults age 50-64. It’s also

higher among women and people with less than \$100,000 incomes, compared with men and the better-off.

Views on raising the Medicare age are about the same now as they were in a similar question asked in 1997. However, support was 16 points higher than it is now – 46 percent vs. 30 percent – in a 2011 question that specified the change would be gradual, and was proposed “in order to reduce the national debt.” Similarly, support for raising taxes on the wealthy was higher, by 12 points, when it was posed in the context of debt reduction. These results suggest that what may matter in fiscal cliff talks is not only what’s cut or raised – but how and why.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Nov. 21-25, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,016 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you support or oppose (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

11/25/12 - Summary Table

	NET	Support Str	Smwht	NET	Oppose Smwht	Str	No op.
a. raising taxes on incomes over 250-thousand dollars a year	60	42	18	37	14	23	3
b. reducing deductions people can claim on their federal income taxes	44	20	24	49	21	28	8
c. raising the age for Medicare coverage from 65 to 67	30	14	16	67	18	49	3

Trend:

a. raising taxes on income over 250-thousand dollars a year

	NET	Support Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Oppose Somewhat	Strongly	No opinion
11/25/12	60	42	18	37	14	23	3

Compare to: In order to reduce the national debt, would you support or oppose raising taxes on Americans with incomes over 250-thousand dollars a year?

	NET	Support Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Oppose Somewhat	Strongly	No opinion
7/17/11	72	55	17	27	10	17	1
4/17/11	72	54	18	27	10	17	1

b. reducing deductions people can claim on their federal income taxes

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/25/12	44	20	24	49	21	28	8

Compare to: Would you support or oppose changing federal tax law to make it harder for individuals to reduce their taxes by taking tax deductions?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
10/2/11	43	47	11

c. raising the age for Medicare coverage from 65 to 67

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/25/12	30	14	16	67	18	49	3

Compare to: In order to reduce the national debt, would you support or oppose gradually raising the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 67?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
7/17/11	46	25	21	54	12	42	1

Compare to: Would you favor or oppose gradually raising the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 67 over the next 30 years?

	Favor	Oppose	No opinion
7/8/97	33	64	3

*** END ***