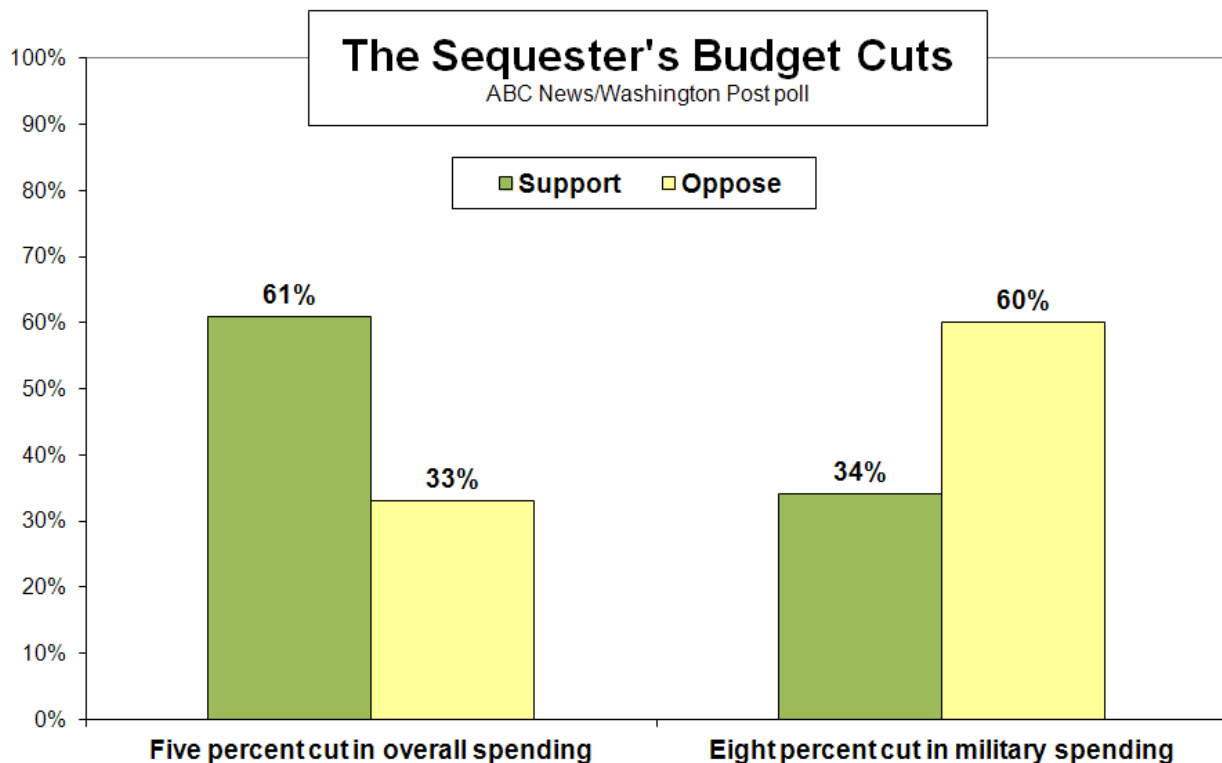


Most Back Cuts Overall – But Not to the Military

For all the dire warnings, most Americans welcome a five percent cut in overall federal spending this year. But the defense budget is another matter.

The public by nearly 2-1, 61-33 percent, supports cutting the overall budget along the lines of the sequester that took effect last Friday. But by nearly an identical margin, Americans in this ABC News/Washington Post poll oppose an eight percent across-the-board cut in military spending.

These views come before the \$85 billion in cuts this year have taken hold, leaving open the question of how the public will respond once the reductions hit home. Nonetheless, the results suggest that warnings about the nation's military readiness have resonated, while the public is more skeptical about the damage the sequester poses to federal programs more generally.



Support for a five percent reduction in federal spending crosses party lines in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#); it includes 57 percent of Democrats, six in 10 independents and three-quarters of Republicans. Shaving eight percent off the military budget,

on the other hand, is opposed by 73 percent of Republicans and 63 percent of independents, with Democrats split down the middle.

Strength of sentiment also lands squarely in favor of overall budget cuts, and against those to the military. Strong support for overall cuts outpaces strong opposition by 15 percentage points, while it's the opposite, by 25 points, when it comes to military spending.

Republicans feel more strongly about reducing overall spending, with 55 percent strongly in favor, 19 and 34 points greater than strong sentiment among independents and Democrats, respectively. Republicans and independents more strongly defend the defense budget compared with Democrats, by 25 and 16 points, respectively.

CUTS – The public's willingness to cut federal spending overall likely reflects continued concerns about the deficit, as well as frustration with Washington's ongoing budget wrangles. In an [ABC/Post poll in January](#) nearly nine in 10 Americans rated reducing federal spending as a high priority for the president and Congress, in the mix with other top issues such as restoring the economy and restructuring the tax system.

However, a [December ABC/Post poll](#) during the "fiscal cliff" negotiations found that majorities didn't want to cut military spending in order to reach a budget agreement. (Most also opposed cutting Medicare, which also is hit by sequestration, and Medicaid and Social Security, which are spared the sequestration cuts.)

ABC/Post polling also has found a continued preference for a mix of tax increases and spending cuts to reduce the deficit, as well as greater approval for Obama vs. the Republicans in Congress on handling federal spending, as reported in an [ABC/Post poll last week](#). That suggests risk for both sides, but particularly the GOP, if the mood over sequestration cuts turns sour.

It's worth noting, too, that support for budget cuts in general may be easier to express than support for cuts in particular programs – again raising the question of the direction of public attitudes as specific cuts take hold.

There have been different estimates of the extent of sequestration cuts this year; the figures of five percent in total, and eight percent of military spending, were reported by The New York Times on Feb. 21.

GROUPS – In addition to partisan divisions, there are differences on views of the cuts among ideological and other groups. Liberals divide on both kinds of across-the-board spending cuts, while nearly six in 10 moderates and just more than seven in 10 conservatives support overall cuts and oppose military cuts. Among those who say they're "very" conservative, almost two-thirds strongly favor overall cuts and strongly oppose those to defense.

Among other groups, men are 16 points more apt than women to support reducing the federal budget overall, and support for cuts generally also is higher among whites vs. nonwhites and college graduates vs. those with less education.

There's also an interesting dynamic among income brackets. People earning less than \$50,000 a year are less supportive of overall budget cuts, compared with better-off adults. But on military spending, views differ – support for cuts peaks among wealthier Americans, those with incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Finally, this poll finds support for overall cuts 9 points higher when the question comes after asking about military cuts (66 vs. 57 percent) – majorities in both cases, but suggesting more acceptance of overall cuts if the military takes a hit, too. On the other hand, views on military cuts are similar regardless of question order.

	Support-oppose	
	Five percent overall cut	Eight percent cut to military
All	61-33%	34-60%
Democrats	57-38	47-48
Republicans	76-18	23-73
Independents	60-37	33-63
Liberals	50-43	49-45
Moderates	59-34	36-58
Conservatives NET	72-25	26-71
Somewhat cons.	69-28	29-67
Very cons.	77-21	23-77
Men	70-26	39-56
Women	54-39	30-64
Whites	66-29	33-63
Nonwhites	52-41	37-55
Less than \$50K	57-37	32-62
\$50-100K	69-24	32-63
\$100K-plus	68-29	50-45
College grads	67-29	42-52
Non-grads	59-34	31-63

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Feb. 27-March 3, 2013, among a random national sample of 1,017 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?

3/3/13 - Summary Table

	-----	Support	-----	-----	Oppose	-----	No
	NET	Strgly	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Strgly	op.
a. a five percent across-the-board cut in overall federal spending this year	61	35	26	33	13	20	6
b. an eight percent across-the-board cut in U.S. military spending this year	34	18	17	60	17	43	6

*** END ***