

YG NETWORK

YG Network's Public Opinion Research

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About YG Network's Public Opinion Research:

Not long ago, CNN Money reported on a survey revealing that “roughly three quarters of Americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck, with little to no emergency savings” because “after paying debts and taking care of housing, car and child care-related expenses, the respondents said there just isn't enough money left over for saving more.” This, while tens of millions of Americans remain out-of-work, and millions more live in fear of losing their jobs, one paycheck away from financial and personal disaster.

***When it comes to real incomes,
the Washington Post recently reported
that the “typical American family makes
less than it did in 1989.”***

It doesn't need to be like this. But to move past it and get things back on track, we need a workable, aspirational conservative vision.

For millions of middle class Americans looking for an optimistic conservative alternative to the Left's big-government agenda, there's a welcome development: The YG Network—a non-profit 501(c)(4) dedicated to promoting next-generation conservative policies—has developed the next generation of conservative messaging focused on the concerns of the middle class.

While it's absolutely critical that conservatives continue to fight for the American people on issues like ending Obamacare and reining in the Imperial Presidency, we simply can't allow President Obama's policy failures—and our efforts to combat those failures—to keep us from giving middle class Americans the robust conservative policies we so badly need.

That's why YG Network has spent 2013 testing Americans' receptiveness to our ideas with an extensive public opinion research project that now includes two national benchmark polls, middle class focus groups of Swing and Tea Party respondents in eight cities, and dial tests of Swing and Tea Party respondents in four areas throughout the country. This is merely a first step in our organization's goal of developing and advocating for our actionable, conservative agenda for the middle class.

As we set out to identify problems and discuss solutions, it was never a secret that middle class Americans are frustrated with our economy's anemic performance and Washington's failure to turn things around. But what we saw throughout the nation goes well beyond frustration; words like pessimism, disbelief, anger, dejection, outrage and resentment are closer to the mark.

According to a recent National Journal poll, while 50% of Americans believe a higher level of education is the most effective way to stay in the middle class, 49% believe paying for college is only realistic for the upper class.

These ill feelings are only worsened as Washington leaders fail to connect the dots between our persistent slow growth with its daunting macroeconomic implications, and the day-in, day-out frustration and outrage felt by middle class Americans who were promised better and are willing to work hard for it.

For instance, while conservatives agree that our government's budget and debt crisis must be brought under control before it's too late, what causes more middle class men and women to lose sleep are the budget and debt crises befalling their own families. These struggles go beyond the familiar kitchen table hand-wringing over dollars and cents; they are deeply felt, intensely personal, and have clearly rocked many hard-working Americans' faith in themselves, in middle class values, in our leaders and institutions, and in the future of our communities and our country.

We asked participants what they thought was going well for the middle class, and they truly struggled to provide an answer. We asked if they thought our country was headed in the right direction or on the wrong track, and the near-unanimous choice was that we're on the wrong track. We asked if they thought their children could look forward to a better life than their own, and they all said no—they expect their children to be worse off than themselves. We asked them who, among our nation's leaders, is looking out for them, and they said 'no one.'

Again, it doesn't need to be like this, but fixing it will take an actionable conservative agenda with clear goals to address middle class priorities, and leadership to bring our fellow Americans on-board with this vision. It's our hope that this body of research will help prioritize these needed policies as YG Network builds a clear agenda to help our troubled nation.

While YG Network's extensive research lays bare the stark reality of public opinion in our country, it also gives reason to take heart. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted in reporting on our focus groups earlier this year, "Despite their deep pessimism about the direction of the country, all but two of the 70 focus group participants favored a more upbeat narrative about the future of the country, believing 'the middle class can achieve their aspirations' through 'smart reforms.'"

Our fellow Americans are down—but they're not out. Right now they want leaders who understand and care about the pain they're going through, and who have the courage to respond with policies grounded in fairness that deliver tangible results for middle class families. Below, with all of YG Network's relevant public opinion research included, are some ideas we believe could help address those demands.

Reducing Taxes & Government Spending:

Commonsense Budgeting to Reduce Washington's Record Debt

Most of us have to live by a simple rule: we can't spend more than we take in. So when Washington spends more money than it takes in, that's not fair to hardworking Americans. While many are concerned about our record national debt, YG Network's polling and focus groups show that Americans place job creation as their top priority. By growing our economy, creating jobs, and restraining Washington's overspending, we can make government work for the American people once again.

YG Network Poll Data:

Twice as many respondents said that the "economy and jobs" is the most important economic issue (38%) as those who said the "debt and deficit" was the most important economic issue (20%) (March poll).

Conservatives: 35% econ/jobs, 30% deficit & debt

Moderates: 40% econ/jobs, 18% deficit/debt

Liberals: 39% econ/jobs, 7% deficit/debt

The May poll confirmed these findings, with 41% saying "growing the economy and creating jobs" and only 19% saying "reducing the deficit and debt" was most important.

Conservatives: 39% econ/jobs, 29% deficit & debt

Moderates: 45% econ/jobs, 18% deficit/debt

Liberals: 39% econ/jobs, 8% deficit/debt

85% are concerned about the federal budget deficit and increasing national debt, with 52% saying the deficit and debt are hurting current economic growth and job creation (May poll).

Conservatives: 93% debt, 68% hurting jobs

Moderates: 85% debt, 49% hurting jobs

Liberals: 75% debt, 34% hurting jobs

65% support a federal budget plan that balances the budget in 10 years that raises revenue through tax reform, while just 22% prefer a federal budget plan that raises taxes for new spending (May poll).

Conservatives: 80% reform, 12% more taxes

Moderates: 67% reform, 18% more taxes

Liberals: 45% reform, 40% more taxes

YG Network Focus Group Data:

"If you grow the economy and increase jobs, the economy will resume itself [improving our nation's federal budget and debt issues]."

– Swing participant, Manassas

"We are going from crisis to crisis with no long-term strategy."

– Swing participant, Manassas

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents believe that job-creation must be the number-one priority, but they are concerned that spending is out of control. In their view, more taxes means a bigger government, and a bigger government means less accountability in government, which is something that they are seeing more and more of.

WHAT:

WHY:

Budgeting is Important

"Most of us have to live by a simple rule: we can't spend more than we take in. But when Washington spends more money than it takes in, it's not fair to the country, it's not fair to young people, it's not fair to those who are working hard to get ahead, and it's not fair to the elderly. Creating jobs, boosting wages, and growing the economy will help pay down our national debt. So will restraining Washington overspending."

This really resonated with respondents. They believe that the federal government has been very irresponsible with budgeting, and they know they would not be able to run their own lives that way.

The Consequences of Our National Debt

"Our debt now stands at \$17 trillion, up more than \$5 trillion since this President took office. That is a sorry record. Over-spending and debt have very real consequences in the economy—right now—not just in the future. Debt of this magnitude also creates a national security concern, as we sell more and more American bonds to foreign governments."

There is strong agreement among respondents that our national debt is harmful right now, not just in the future.

Cutting Spending

"The American people deserve a responsible budget with a combination of spending reductions and the right type of tax reform. And we can do this. The budget sequester, which has cut billions in spending over the past several months, shows that life as we know it in America won't come to an end if we pare back our spending further."

Respondents believe that government spending needs to be cut, and the cuts that occurred as a result of the budget sequester were not very harmful, as they were led to believe.

Returning to an Orderly Economy

"It is a perfectly reasonable goal for us to spend the same amount of discretionary funds in the coming year as we spent five or six years ago. Indeed, a responsible budget, one that strives to get into balance within a decade, will return America to an orderly economy. It will help entrepreneurs create jobs, and provide more income for Americans who are trying to work hard, preserve the best of our traditions, and get a little ahead in life."

Having conveyed the nature of the problem of our national debt, creating a responsible budget that strives to get us into balance within a decade becomes the solution. Respondents believe that having a balanced budget would benefit our economy. Respondents believe that rather than automatically increasing discretionary funding each year, we should roll back our level of spending to what it was a few years ago because that is one way for us to reach the goal of a balanced budget.

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>Putting Americans First / Growing the Economy</p> <p><i>"Let me describe the key elements of what needs to be in a budget that puts the American people first—and not Washington first. Let's call it the 'fairness budget' plan." AND "It's about time we put the American people first when drafting a federal budget. And as we work to get our spending under control, we must stay focused on an equally important goal: growing our economy. If we cannot restore a vigorously growing economy in America, where the fruits are widely shared, the struggles of the middle class will persist."</i></p>	<p>This shows who the priority needs to be: the American people, not those in power. And "growing the economy" is an imperative everyone demands.</p>
<p>The Social Safety Net</p> <p><i>"First, such a plan must protect the government services and safety nets that are so important to America's well-being—like the protection of the most vulnerable and help for our veterans."</i></p>	<p>Protecting the most vulnerable in our society is a key value respondents hold. They want to help those who have fallen on hard times, and they support programs that adhere to that value. They also understand that if our safety net programs are broke, we can't help anyone.</p>
<p>The tax code</p> <p><i>"It must simplify the tax code by lowering rates and closing loopholes. That could mean, for example, putting a limit, or cap, on the home mortgage interest deduction."</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that our tax code is too complicated, and they would like to see it reformed. There is some support among respondents for limiting the home mortgage interest deduction on non-primary residences (It's important to make clear that this applies only to non-primary residences).</p>
<p>Corporate welfare</p> <p><i>"A 'fairness budget' must roll back corporate welfare in the energy sector, and end taxpayer bailouts of 'too-big-to-fail' financial institutions."</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that it is unfair for taxpayers to bail out companies that are very profitable or those that do not act responsibly.</p>

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>The Military</p> <p><i>"Recognizing the importance of guarding the safety and liberty of Americans, it must support our men and women in uniform, maintaining the necessary spending to ensure they have the resources they need to carry out their missions, and to care for their families."</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that guarding our safety and liberty is a very important function of government, and they greatly respect those who put themselves in harm's way to defend our nation.</p>
<p>Obsolete Programs</p> <p><i>"Government bureaucracies often outlive their usefulness, which is why a 'fairness budget' will start to eliminate obsolete programs."</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that there is a lot of waste in government, and some programs can be consolidated into other programs or eliminated.</p>
<p>Medicare</p> <p><i>"For younger workers hoping for a secure retirement, for people approaching retirement age, and for our seniors, a 'fairness budget' will protect and strengthen Medicare. Such a budget changes the direction of healthcare—away from unsustainable government spending, clearing the way for patient-centered reforms."</i></p>	<p>This shows simultaneous concern for the seniors of today and for young people who will one day be seniors. Respondents believe that some changes need to be made to protect and strengthen Medicare. It is important to them that we keep our promise to seniors and that we provide them with the health care they need.</p>
<p>College Tuition</p> <p><i>"And a 'fairness budget' begins to address spikes in college tuition."</i></p>	<p>Respondents are concerned that with spikes in college tuition, college is becoming increasingly unaffordable for young people.</p>
<p>Can't Tax Our Way Out of This Problem</p> <p><i>"The truth is we can't just tax our way out of the budget mess we're in. Sending more money to Washington, whether it comes from your pocket or from Donald Trump's, will not create jobs and grow the economy. It will just make the government bigger. And what we need to do is control spending. And we need to grow our economy."</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that spending is out of control. In their view, more taxes means a bigger government, and a bigger government means less accountability in government, which is something that they are seeing more and more of.</p>

Middle Class Tax Relief: Letting Families Keep More of Their Own Money to Raise Their Children

The costs of things like food, energy and healthcare are going up—but wages aren't keeping pace, and for many Americans they're actually decreasing. It's getting harder and harder to make ends meet, much less get ahead—and it's getting really expensive to raise kids. Government alone can't turn our economy around, but here's one thing Washington could do to promote a fairer economy for the middle class: let families keep more of their own money to pay for the costs of raising their children up to age 18. We can do this by replacing the variety of small child tax-credits with a single, \$4,000 credit per-child.

YG Network Poll Data:

58% approve of increasing the child tax credit to \$4,000 per child (from \$1,000), while 32% disapprove (May poll).

- Women: 57% approve
- Hispanics: 66% approve
- African Americans: 73% approve
- Conservatives: 52% approve
- Moderates: 58% approve
- Liberals: 62% approve

YG Network Focus Group Data:

We learned through our focus groups that it's important to inform Americans that this policy is deficit-neutral and to emphasize that it simply allows people to keep more of their own money.

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents told us that it is becoming more difficult to afford children. We heard that increasing the child tax credit would allow people to have more money for their families, which would help families recovering from our nation's recent economic challenges. This scored in the mid-70s to mid-80s (on a zero to 100 scale of agreement) among both Tea Party respondents and moderate Independents.

WHAT:

WHY:

Description of the issue

"For generations in America, we've believed that almost anybody can start with next-to-nothing and make it big. Or, at the very least, they could live comfortably in the middle class. Americans believe that anyone who has the opportunity to succeed, and then works hard to fulfill their dreams, should be able to get ahead. Costs for things like food, energy, and healthcare are going up, and wages aren't, or they're going down. And that's for people lucky enough to have a job. It's getting harder and harder to make ends meet, much less get ahead. And it's getting really expensive to raise kids. A recent survey showed that three out of every four Americans live paycheck to paycheck."

Respondents told us that the conservative advocate appealed to families with this argument by discussing the day-to-day concerns they are encountering. This verbiage is helpful to contextualize why the child tax credit is important.

Expanding the Child Tax Credit

"Government alone can't turn the economy around, but there are things it could do to promote a fairer economy for middle class Americans. Here's one idea: Right now many middle class families qualify for various tax benefits, including dependent exemptions, a \$1,000 child credit, and the child care credit. These combine to lower the typical household's tax bill by about \$1,550. Yet the Department of Agriculture estimates that it costs \$13,000 each year to raise a child through age 17. That's why some lawmakers have proposed allowing families to keep more of their paychecks by replacing the variety of child credits with a single \$4,000 credit per child. That way, middle class parents could keep more of their own money to pay for the costs of raising their children up to age 18. That means more money available for clothing, child care, tuition, and food. In case you're wondering, this tax credit is not another government handout. The child tax credit is for working parents to be able to keep more of their hard-earned dollars for their families."

Respondents told us that it is becoming more difficult to afford children. We heard that increasing the child tax credit would allow people to have more money for their families, which would help families recovering from our nation's recent economic challenges. This scored in the mid-70s to mid-80s (on a zero to 100 scale of agreement) among both Tea Party respondents and moderate Independents.

WHAT:

WHY:

Lifting Burdens Faced by Parents

"Parents have taken on the awesome challenge and financial burden of raising the next generation. They're taking care of their families, and at the same time they're paying very high FICA taxes to support today's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. It's only reasonable for government to ease the tax burden of economically stressed middle class families when they have children to raise. Those of us in the middle class should be able to keep our own money, so we can use it as we see fit: To save for our kids' college tuition, or help pay for healthcare, or meet whatever expenses come our way. The bottom line is that a single \$4,000 per child tax credit would let you keep more of your paycheck to spend on your family's needs."

This shows a concern about the challenges today's American parents face and aligns with a widely-held value among our respondents, that government should not add to the already difficult burdens faced by those who are raising children.

Energy Independence & Lower Costs

Reducing Consumer Energy Costs & Increasing Energy Independence

Energy costs are a significant drain on families' paychecks. From home heating and cooling, electricity, gasoline and the energy costs built into what we buy, when the price of life's necessities goes up, your paycheck effectively goes down. And that means people who are already struggling are the ones who get hit the hardest. That's not fair. We can protect families' paychecks with an energy policy that develops our home-grown resources in an environmentally-sensitive manner, while pursuing renewable and sustainable resources for the future. YG Network's bold energy strategy includes domestic exploration, conservation and developing a wide variety of renewable energy resources like wind, solar, geothermal and biofuels.

YG Network Poll Data:

90% of respondents have experienced higher energy costs (May poll).

Conservatives: 92% higher energy costs

Moderates: 92% higher costs

Liberals: 86% higher costs

Energy prices (including gas, an important pocketbook issue) are hurting personal finances more (88%) than the national debt (71%) or government regulations (61%) (March poll).

Conservatives: 91% energy, 80% debt, 80% regulations

Moderates: 86% energy, 70% debt, 56% regulations

Liberals: 84% energy, 57% debt, 41% regulations

65% agree we should expand drilling off-shore and on federal lands after knowing that the United States has enough natural gas to meet our energy needs for 90 years (May poll).

Conservatives: 83% agree

Moderates: 63% agree

Liberals: 44% agree

84% agree that we can focus on energy production and environmental protection simultaneously (March poll).

Conservatives: 82% agree

Moderates: 87% agree

Liberals: 86% agree

YG Network Focus Group Data:

"We need to do more with our resources."

– Tea Party participant, Minneapolis

"According to my brother, we have so much oil in the Gulf. It will last hundreds of years, but they don't want us to know that."

– Tea Party participant, Palm Beach

"I would agree [with increased energy exploration] if it makes us less dependent on other countries."

– Swing participant, Palm Beach

But some remain skeptical based on high-profile events and wonder how this is accomplished.

"The oil lobby wants it but the environmentalists say it will do a lot of damage. Where is the trade off?"

– Swing participant, Manassas

YG Network Dial Tests: YG Network's policy scored in the mid-70s to low 90s (on a zero to 100 scale of agreement) among both Tea Party respondents and moderate Independents. Having conveyed the nature of the problem (high prices, a reliance on foreign oil), Keystone XL becomes a solution. Respondents told us that we should be using our own resources for our energy needs—and we have plenty of our own resources that we can be using. We also heard that they believe that we can obtain these energy resources without harming the environment. It's important to explain Keystone XL as some Americans are more familiar with the project than others.

WHAT:

WHY:

Something For Everyone

"We can drive energy prices down with an energy policy that develops domestic resources in an environmentally sensitive manner, while pursuing renewable energy sources for a sustainable energy future. A bold energy strategy includes domestic exploration, conservation, and development of a variety of renewable sources like wind, solar, geothermal, and biofuels. This way everyone wins."

This policy shows simultaneous concern for the environment and concern for extracting the energy America needs. Respondents support using all of the sources of energy available to us to reduce our energy costs. This scored in the mid-70s to low 90s (on a zero to 100 scale of agreement) among both Tea Party respondents and moderate Independents.

Energy and Caring

"If government leaders truly care about the Americans they are paid to represent, they'll work to keep the cost of energy as low as possible, while also keeping our air and water clean."

This is designed to focus on the theme of caring, while at the same time concentrating on personal needs.

Keystone

"Instead of depending on foreign energy, we can get oil and natural gas right here at home. The U.S. and Canada are sitting on the largest oil and natural gas reserves in the world—over a trillion barrels of proven energy reserves. The Keystone Pipeline, awaiting President Obama's approval, will safely transport oil from the shale oil fields of Canada to the refineries of the southern United States. This will help keep energy resources within our hemisphere, provide a major source of affordable energy, and reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern oil. In addition, it will create tens of thousands of American jobs. If the pipeline isn't built, the oil is still going to be transported across the United States, but by using riskier modes, such as trucks and rail transport. Pipelines are five times safer than rail transport, and nearly 500 times safer than trucking. And both rail and truck use more energy to transport less fuel. Among these options, a pipeline is the best way to move this fuel. If we refuse to approve the pipeline, the Canadians are still going to extract and transport the oil. By approving the Keystone Pipeline, we can assure that the oil is transported by the safest, most environmentally friendly means. That's what we should be aiming to do."

Having conveyed the nature of the problem (high prices, a reliance on foreign oil), Keystone XL becomes a solution. Respondents told us that we should be using our own resources for our energy needs—and we have plenty of our own resources that we can be using. We also heard that they believe that we can obtain these energy resources without harming the environment. It's important to explain Keystone XL as some Americans are more familiar with the project than others.

WHAT:

WHY:

Federal Lands

"Land owned by the federal government has rich energy deposits of valuable oil shale—enough to provide Americans with 140 years of electricity. But the Obama Administration won't allow this energy source to be tapped. Oil and natural gas production on federal lands is down by more than 40% compared to 10 years ago. While some in Washington would present Americans with the false choice between protecting the environment and lowering energy costs, it's been proven that we can do both—safely. That's why we should expand safe offshore energy, using proven technology, and increase energy production on federal lands."

Beyond Keystone, these are other viable ideas for keeping energy prices in check. Participants were more receptive to energy exploration on federal lands than to offshore exploration, due largely to recent events they have witnessed regarding offshore drilling.

Natural Gas and Domestic Clean Coal

"Natural gas is another abundant and affordable domestic energy source. It's clean, too—in recent years U.S. greenhouse emissions have fallen, due in large part to power plants switching from clean coal to natural gas. Speaking of domestic clean coal, it's another fossil fuel that's cheap and plentiful; right now it provides about half of the nation's electricity, and more than 760,000 American jobs."

Our respondents agreed with these opinions on domestic natural gas and clean coal.

Solyndra

"What government should not do is throw money at wasteful projects, or reward companies because of their political involvement. Unfortunately the Obama Administration has made some ill-advised investments of taxpayer dollars into sustainable energy companies with unsustainable business practices. Solyndra, the bankrupt manufacturer of solar panels, is the most famous example, but it isn't the only one."

Our respondents hate government waste and cronyism, and this statement goes right to the heart of their concerns. It's important to explain the background of Solyndra, as some Americans are more familiar with it than others.

Improving Healthcare and Controlling Its Costs

Reducing Healthcare Costs & Expanding Access for Americans

Our healthcare system is under threat in America, with out-of-control costs, reduced access to health services, and millions without health insurance. While some say that Obamacare, also known as the “Affordable Care Act,” is the solution, the facts show otherwise—as it raises costs and harms our fragile economy. Not only must conservatives continue to fight Obamacare, as costs continue to rise and middle class wages stagnate, it’s absolutely critical that we address this cost issue, which amounts to a pay cut for many working families.

Americans deserve a healthcare system where insurers compete for our business, keeping prices down and quality high, and allowing Americans to see the doctor of their choice. We need to make prices transparent, so Americans aren’t left in the dark when it comes to the price they’re paying for the services they use. We need to allow small businesses to pool together to offer healthcare at a lower cost, and we need to let insurers compete with one another across state lines. Most of all, we need to put patients first, empowering Americans to choose the kind of affordable insurance that’s best for them and their families.

YG Network Poll Data:

72% of Americans are worried the cost of health insurance will increase under Obamacare (May poll).

Conservatives: 89%

Moderates: 71%

Liberals: 54%

65% agree that “higher health insurance premiums paid by employers mean lower wages for workers” (May poll).

62% are worried they won’t be able to receive care from the doctor of their choice (May poll).

Conservatives: 79%

Moderates: 66%

Liberals: 37%

57% are worried they will not be able to keep their current healthcare plan (May poll).

Conservatives: 74%

Moderates: 55%

Liberals: 37%

YG Network Focus Group Data:

"Obamacare is putting our healthcare in jeopardy."

– Tea Party participant, Palm Beach

"Obamacare (isn't good for the middle class). Part of my job is choosing health care plan for 35 employees. They are preparing us for shock, saying we will see 100% health care increases."

– Swing participant, Phoenix

"Obamacare was an incentive for wages not to go up."

– Swing participant, Palm Beach

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents are very concerned about the direction of our health care system, and out-of-control costs are hurting middle class families. While respondents find some intentions of the Affordable Care Act appealing, they are concerned about the future of health care, and they think we indeed can do better than the Affordable Care Act. Respondents support having a different approach to health care. They believe that choice and competition will control health care costs and improve outcomes.

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>Description of the health care problem</p> <p><i>"Health care is an issue that affects each of us. Our broken health care system has created a crisis in America that has led to out-of-control costs, less access to health services, and millions without health insurance. The liberals' solution to the health care crisis is the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. It's a solution that puts quality medical care in jeopardy."</i></p>	<p>Respondents are very concerned about the direction of our health care system, and out-of-control costs are hurting middle class families.</p>
<p>Premiums</p> <p><i>"President Obama promised that this law would reduce health care costs. But despite these claims, under the Affordable Care Act, health insurance premiums are continuing to rise significantly. In Vermont, they will rise by 10% next year. In Rhode Island, by 18%, and in Maryland, by 25%."</i></p>	<p>Respondents are not experiencing the reduced health care costs that President Obama promised. In fact, many have seen their health care premiums skyrocket since the law was passed. This is designed to focus on the theme that there are differences between what President Obama promised and what is really happening in our health care system.</p>
<p>Age Rating</p> <p><i>"A study from the American Academy of Actuaries reports that starting in 2014, the insurance premiums of 21-29 year olds in the individual market will rise between 10% and 20%. This is because of Obamacare rules that require insurers to charge their oldest customers no more than three times as much as their younger ones. Basically young people just out of school, starting families, paying off student loans, trying to save to buy a house—they have to pay higher premiums for elaborate plans they don't want or need so older people, who usually require more health care, can pay less. It doesn't seem fair."</i></p>	<p>Respondents think that it's unfair that younger people will have to pay higher health insurance rates so that older customers, who typically require more health care services, can pay lower rates.</p>

WHAT:

WHY:

Losing current plans

"President Obama promised that if we liked our current health care plans, we'd get to keep them. Instead, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that between 5 million and 20 million Americans will lose their current plans because of Obamacare. Why? Many employers will find it more feasible just to pay the tax penalties for not providing health insurance to their employees."

Respondents are concerned that some workers are not going to be able to keep their current health care plans because it will be more cost feasible for some employers just to pay the tax penalties for not providing health insurance to their employees. This is designed to focus on the theme that there are differences between what President Obama promised and what is really happening in our health care system.

New Taxes in the Health Care Law

"President Obama promised us that this law would reduce costs and help our economy. But the law includes at least 20 new taxes, including one on medical equipment. So if you need a pacemaker to stay alive, or you're a wounded warrior and need an artificial limb—it's going to cost more. That's wrong."

Respondents are concerned about the new taxes included in the Affordable Care Act. They are particularly concerned about the new tax on medical equipment, which makes it more difficult for the people who rely on medical equipment to improve their lives. This is designed to focus on the theme that there are differences between what President Obama promised and what is really happening in our health care system.

Part-time Workforce

"And many employers are cutting employees' hours from full-time to part-time to avoid the costs associated with the health care law. How does that take care of the working poor?"

This is designed to focus on the negative economic impacts of the Affordable Care Act. Fewer hours means less take-home pay for workers.

The Affordable Care Act

"There are some good intentions in the law, such as the desire to take care of the health care needs of the uninsured, and those with pre-existing conditions. But the law is proving to be a massive and complex mess. We can do better."

While respondents find some intentions of the Affordable Care Act appealing, they are concerned about the future of health care, and they think we indeed can do better than the Affordable Care Act.

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>A Different Health Care Approach</p> <p><i>“Let me offer a different approach that focuses on providing the highest quality of care, while reducing costs through increased competition, improving outcomes, and expanding choices. To start off, we need a health care system where health insurers compete for our business, forcing them to keep their prices down.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents support having a different approach to health care. They believe that choice and competition will control health care costs and improve outcomes.</p>
<p>Transparency</p> <p><i>“And then we need to make prices transparent, so people know how much they’re paying for the services they’re using.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that transparency is important to controlling health care costs. People need to know how much they are paying for the care and services that they are receiving so they can make more informed decisions about the health care they seek.</p>
<p>Fostering Competition</p> <p><i>“We need to allow small businesses to pool together to offer health care at lower prices. We need to allow Americans to buy policies across state lines, to foster more competition so we can bring prices down and encourage greater quality of care.” AND “We need to empower patients to choose, through competing health plans, the kind of insurance that’s best for them. Competition will do a better job of controlling costs and providing quality of care than heavy-handed Washington regulations.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that these are viable ideas for fostering competition and keeping health care costs down.</p>
<p>Promoting Wellness</p> <p><i>“We need to promote wellness and prevention by giving employers greater flexibility to reward their employees for healthy lifestyles.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents support the idea of promoting wellness and prevention because those ultimately reduce health care costs.</p>

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>Tax Credits</p> <p><i>“Right now, the tax code penalizes Americans who have to buy their own health insurance. It would be fairer to provide insurance tax credits for all Americans, not just employers, so they have the resources to buy the plans of their choice.”</i></p>	<p>This addresses respondents’ concerns about fairness. They think that Americans who have to buy their own health insurance should have the same tax credits as employers so that all Americans are treated fairly.</p>
<p>Small Businesses</p> <p><i>“Despite the administration’s controversial decision to delay forcing companies to join Obamacare for a year, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce says three-quarters of small businesses are planning to duck the costly law by firing workers, reducing hours of full-time staff, or shifting many to part-time. This is no way to run a healthcare system.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents are concerned about the negative economic impacts of the Affordable Care Act. This is designed to focus on a very credible source—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—that is expressing significant concerns about the impacts of the health care law.</p>
<p>Increasing Affordability</p> <p><i>“We all want a healthy America. And when Americans get sick, we all want them to receive the best care possible, and we all want that care to be affordable. We need to focus on health care reforms that will increase affordability, treat everyone fairly, and provide the flexibility for Americans to make the best health care decisions for themselves and their families.”</i></p>	<p>This language summarizes the entire argument for reducing healthcare costs and expanding access for Americans.</p>

Protecting Medicare for Today's Seniors & Modernizing It for the Next Generation

This much is sure: Medicare is running out of money and time is running out to fix it. We need innovative approaches to protect Medicare for seniors—both today and in the future—because if Medicare goes broke, it can't help anyone. Respondents agree, when informed of Medicare's unsustainable path, that to protect this critical program we need to give future Medicare recipients the flexibility to shop for the best coverage among a set of quality plans—plans that would compete for their business and which offer guaranteed minimum benefits. American seniors deserve affordable, high-quality medical care, and with smart reforms, we can continue to deliver that needed care.

YG Network Poll Data:

Only 39% agree that "Medicare spending has to be reduced to get the debt under control," while 54% disagree (May poll).

Conservatives: 47% agree to reduce Medicare spending, 45% disagree

Moderates: 40% agree to reduce Medicare, 55% disagree

Liberals: 30% agree to reduce Medicare, 64% disagree

By a two to one margin, respondents favor modernizing Medicare by providing choices to consumers so competition can control costs and the economy isn't burdened by higher taxes (59%) over the federal government raising taxes on wealthy seniors and limiting payments to doctors and hospitals to avoid fundamental changes to Medicare (30%) (May poll).

When informed that Medicare is on an unsustainable path to insolvency, 65% favor reducing benefits for seniors with higher incomes (March poll).

Conservatives: 63% reduce benefits

Moderates: 65% reduce benefits

Liberals: 68% reduce benefits

53% favor gradually raising the eligibility age from 65 to 67 for future retirees (March poll).

Conservatives: 59% favor

Moderates: 49% favor

Liberals: 50% favor

56% believe that Medicare eligible seniors should be allowed to use government subsidies to stay on their private health plans instead of automatically enrolling in Medicare (March poll).

Conservatives: 66% allow subsidies

Moderates: 52%

Liberals: 50%

YG Network Focus Group Data:

Focus Group participants felt that Medicare needed reforms, but were only vaguely familiar with how it works or what it costs.

"It's shaky. I don't know if it's financially sound."

– Swing participant, Manassas

"More competition to bring prices down."

– Swing participant, Minneapolis

"I just had a CT scan and it was covered so I have no idea what it costs."

–Swing participant, Manassas

YG Network Dial Tests: Protecting Medicare comports with respondents' values because we are keeping a promise to our seniors by helping them get the health care they need, and we are helping the most vulnerable. Also, respondents strongly agree with the idea that seniors have earned their Medicare benefit after paying into the system all of their working lives. It is not a handout. When informed that Medicare is on an unsustainable path, they understand that changes need to be made for the program to continue serving seniors well. It's important to respondents that those age 55 and older will have the peace of mind of not having any changes to Medicare. Respondents believe that market competition will help control costs, and they liked the description of the Medicare Part D model and how that could be used to create choice and competition in all of Medicare.

WHAT:

WHY:

Saving Medicare

"We need some innovative approaches to save Medicare, and thereby give peace of mind to the seniors of today—and tomorrow." AND "And it's really not fair that people who have paid into Medicare all through their working years face an uncertain health insurance future. Medicare is a benefit that our seniors have earned."

Protecting Medicare comports with respondents' values because we are keeping a promise to our seniors by helping them get the health care they need, and we are helping the most vulnerable. Also, respondents strongly agree with the idea that seniors have earned their Medicare benefit after paying into the system all of their working lives. It is not a handout.

The Challenge We Face With Medicare

"The program has paid out more than it has taken in for years. That trend will worsen as the American population ages, the Baby Boomers retire, and the proportion of Americans under age 65 shrinks. And the longer Congress and the President wait to deal with it, the more painful the solutions will be, according to the Medicare trustees. This isn't news. We've known for years about this problem. Why hasn't anything been done about it?"

Respondents agree that as the Baby Boomers retire, more seniors will enroll in the program, and waiting to reform Medicare to put it on a sustainable path will lead to painful consequences.

Medicare reimbursements

"Actually, since the 1970s, attempts have been made to reform Medicare. One supposed fix that has been tried several times, and is being tried again through the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, is price controls. Medicare will simply limit the reimbursement paid to doctors and hospitals. That's wrong. Reducing reimbursements can force doctors to lose money every time they see Medicare patients. A doctor facing a break-even or deficit situation might decide to limit how many Medicare patients she takes, or the amount of time spent with each patient. Reduced access to physicians and lower quality care is not an acceptable solution. It's not fair for the government to be limiting patient access to doctors."

Respondents believe that it is unfair for doctors to just break even or even lose money when they see Medicare patients. They are concerned that limiting the reimbursement paid to doctors and hospitals that treat Medicare patients will reduce seniors' access to doctors, which goes against the value that respondents have of caring for seniors.

WHAT:

WHY:

A Better Idea for Protecting Medicare

"So, here's a better idea for protecting Medicare: Let's keep it from going broke, because if it's broke, it can't help anyone. To keep costs in check, we need to give future Medicare recipients the flexibility to shop for the best coverage among a set of quality plans—plans that would compete for their business—and that offer guaranteed minimum benefits." AND "Our plan preserves Medicare, improves quality, and controls costs by allowing seniors to make choices about their own health care."

When informed that Medicare is on an unsustainable path, they understand that changes need to be made for the program to continue serving seniors well. Respondents believe that market competition will help control costs, and they liked the description of the Medicare Part D model and how that could be used to create choice and competition in all of Medicare.

The Medicare Part D Model

"Something similar has been tried in one part of Medicare, and it's actually succeeded. I'm talking about Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit enacted in 2003. Under Medicare Part D, seniors are presented with private prescription-drug coverage options, with different premiums and deductibles. They get to choose the plan that best fits their needs. The federal government applies a certain amount of money toward their preferred plan. If seniors choose plans that cost more than the money they're allotted, then they can make up the difference themselves. A survey published last October shows that 90 percent of seniors are satisfied with Medicare Part D. A government service with high levels of satisfaction is pretty amazing. Even more amazing is that Medicare Part D's actual costs have been lower than government projections. Premium costs are 27% lower than anticipated. Part D costs are 40% lower than the Congressional Budget Office initially predicted. That's unheard of in a government program. Government programs always cost more than initially predicted. That's the potential power of market competition."

Choice and competition are appealing to our respondents. They want to be able to choose the plan that best fits their needs, and among those familiar with Medicare Part D, they believe that the Part D model could be used for all of Medicare. They also like that the Part D costs are lower than initially predicted, which shows that choice and competition work.

WHAT:

WHY:

People age 55 and Older Exempted

“Our proposal first and foremost strives to preserve quality medical care for seniors. In America we must take care of the most vulnerable. It also seeks to preserve the peace of mind of seniors already receiving or about to receive Medicare. To that end, for those who are age 55 or older, our proposal preserves Medicare in its current fee-for-service form. No one who is in the system or near the system is going to experience any change.”

Respondents like that those age 55 and older will have the peace of mind of not having any changes to Medicare.

People under age 55 included

“Our challenge is to preserve these health care benefits for the next generation of retirees. They will have the option of a new type of Medicare that will allow for more choice, save the government money, assure the long-term viability of the program, and protect them when they’re old. Workers who turn 65 in 2024 or later could choose traditional fee-for-service Medicare, or they could direct a federal subsidy, adjusted for inflation, toward health insurance provided by a private company. Just like Medicare Part D, there would be a wide variety of pre-approved plans with guaranteed minimum benefits to choose from. Under our Medicare proposal, if they choose a plan more expensive than the subsidy they would have to pay the difference; if they choose a less expensive plan they would get a rebate. Just as in Part D, private companies would be competing for seniors’ business and would have incentives to keep costs low by rooting out waste and fraud in the system.”

Respondents support the idea of having choice to meet their health care needs. Also, they believe that market competition will incentivize private companies to root out waste and keep costs low, which will lead to lower health care costs.

The Liberals’ Plan for Medicare

“Liberals in Congress talk about protecting Medicare, but, again, Medicare can’t help anyone if it runs out of money. They are committed to the status quo—an unsustainable, one-size-fits-all Medicare program that does nothing to encourage choice and competition, and controls costs only by reducing quality and access.”

Sustainability is important. Everyone wants to protect Medicare for the long term, and respondents believe that the status quo is not a long-term solution to the challenges that Medicare faces.

WHAT:

WHY:

Allowing seniors to opt out of Medicare

"Speaking of choices, some seniors would like to opt out of Medicare and make their own accommodations for health care. But according to rules that date back to the Clinton Administration, any senior that opts out of Medicare loses his or her Social Security benefits. All of them. This doesn't seem fair. After all, they've been paying into the Social Security trust fund for decades. They've also been paying into Medicare. But they're not asking for that money back. Allowing seniors to opt out of Medicare will save the system money. When the federal government has to pay for the health care of fewer seniors, that saves money. Even those over the age of 65 should have the freedom to manage their own health care—without the government interfering."

Respondents agree that allowing seniors to opt out of Medicare could be beneficial because it would save the government money by providing health care coverage to fewer seniors.

Promoting Employment & Self-Reliance

Helping the Neediest Achieve Self-Reliance and Join the Middle Class

When Americans fall on hard times, there's a safety net for them, helping them with life's necessities while they work to get back on their feet. But here's the challenge: instead of helping Americans get back on their feet, the government is too often simply handing people money and sending them away in isolation, not empowering them to achieve self-reliance. This was made worse by President Obama's decision to waive long-standing, bipartisan work requirements for welfare recipients—and today our nation spends nearly \$1 trillion on welfare programs. To be sure, the best way to help out-of-work Americans is to create jobs and grow our economy. We also need to make sure that temporary government assistance is there for those who truly need it by reinstating these commonsense work requirements. We need welfare reforms that care about helping people, without trapping them in a lifetime of dependence.

YG Network Poll Data:

When asked which federal programs should be cut to reduce spending, welfare programs (44%) far outweighed military (32%), Social Security (8%) and Medicare (6%) (March Poll).

82% agree that the 3.5 million able-bodied adults with no dependents who receive food stamps risk long-term dependency and should be obligated to work or actively seek employment in exchange for food stamps (May poll).

Conservatives: 91% agree

Moderates: 83% agree

Liberals: 73% agree

63% of respondents say welfare programs should be available to provide temporary assistance, but the safety net can become a dependency trap by discouraging self-sufficiency and hurting those we intend to help (May poll).

Conservatives: 82% agree

Moderates: 61% agree

Liberals: 44% agree

YG Network Focus Group Data:

"It's such a broken system, I have patients who talk about selling their food stamps."
– Swing participant, Palm Beach

"You either have to be real rich or poor to get benefits. If you're in the middle, you're screwed." – Tea Party participant, Manassas

"We make enough so we can't get [government] benefits, but not enough to send them to college." – Swing participant, Palm Beach

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents recognize that sometimes people need a helping hand from government when they experience difficult circumstances. However, respondents do not believe that a "helping hand" should go on indefinitely. Respondents believe that the federal government is not doing enough to help people make themselves more self-sufficient. Respondents believe that able-bodied welfare recipients should be engaging in work activities. This is seen as an issue of fairness.

WHAT:

WHY:

The Safety Net

"When Americans fall on hard times, there's a safety net for them. The government provides cash, food, housing, and health care so they have a way to survive. Those struggling to put food on the table can get an EBT card, also known as food stamps. For housing there are housing subsidies. Those without jobs can collect unemployment benefits."

Respondents recognize that sometimes people need a helping hand from government when they experience difficult circumstances. However, respondents do not believe that a "helping hand" should go on indefinitely.

The Challenge We Face With The Safety Net

"Here's the challenge: the government is simply handing out money, and then sending people away without direction, and not empowering them to eventually move off of assistance. It's not right when the safety net turns into a trap, one that people cannot escape from. Trapping people in dependency isn't the goal of government assistance. And it isn't compassionate—not to the poor who deserve a better life, and not to middle class workers who foot the bill."

Respondents believe that the federal government is not doing enough to help people make themselves more self-sufficient.

Reforming the Safety Net

"Congress should encourage the right type of tax reform and economic policy. This will encourage job creation in the country, so people have access to better opportunities and less chance of becoming dependent. Indeed, we do need a safety net for the elderly, the disabled, and those who cannot work. We've gone through tough times and need to provide unemployment benefits temporarily. But for too many, government reliance has become a way of life, especially for those on food stamps."

Respondents believe that a strong economy with an abundance of well-paying jobs would reduce the need for government dependence. They agree that the right type of tax reform and economic policy would lead us there. In addition, respondents disapprove of government reliance becoming a way of life. In their view, we need to do more to help people successfully transition to independence and self-reliance.

WHAT:

WHY:

Safety Net Spending

"When we go into economic downturns, more people need government assistance, so spending for aid goes up. But when the economy recovers, even though fewer people need the programs, the spending—which currently totals nearly \$1 trillion—stays the same. That's wrong. It makes sense for assistance spending to rise and fall with actual need. So when the economy recovers and unemployment is reduced, we should expect total welfare spending to be reduced to pre-recession levels. But this has not been the case."

Respondents are frustrated that spending on government assistance increases during economic downturns and then only goes up from there—never decreasing with an economic recovery.

Abuses of the Safety Net

"You may have heard about the 29-year-old California man who can work but doesn't want to. Jason Greenslate uses his food stamps to buy things like lobster, and spends his days surfing, drinking, and chasing girls. And after an Orlando TV station exposed how EBT cards were being used at liquor stores, strip clubs, and casinos, Florida Governor Rick Scott earlier this year signed a law banning their use at these establishments. Able-bodied adults with no dependents, like that surfer, should be required to work or actively seek employment in exchange for food stamps."

Respondents believe that able-bodied adults should be required to work or actively seek employment to receive government benefits, such as food stamps. They strongly resent the idea that they are working hard while there are people out there who are getting something for nothing. This scored very well among Tea Party respondents. This also scored well among moderate Independents, although, there was some disagreement among Independents.

WHAT:

WHY:

The 1996 Welfare Reform Legislation

"The 1996 welfare reform legislation was the most successful social welfare initiative in 50 years. Because of it, there were three million fewer children in poverty, with the lowest poverty rate among African-American children in history. Welfare caseloads were cut in half. Millions were lifted out of poverty. It was a reform that cared about helping people who fell on tough times, without trapping them in the cycle of dependency. And it worked."

This resonated particularly well with the Tea Party respondents. It is important to keep in mind that not everyone remembers the 1996 welfare reform legislation, so providing background information is very important. In the context of this discussion, we explored the often-cited line: "Welfare ultimately hurts those it intends to help." Be aware: this paradoxical statement is interpreted literally by some respondents, who did not grasp helping and hurting simultaneously.

Undermining Welfare Reform

"Unfortunately, the Obama Administration used the 2009 stimulus bill, and then its executive authority last year, to waive important federal requirements, ones that ensure that a portion of able-bodied welfare recipients engage in work activities. These bipartisan work requirements were a key part of the welfare reform legislation in 1996 that was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton. It's wrong for the Obama Administration to oppose them."

Respondents believe that able-bodied welfare recipients should be engaging in work activities. This is seen as an issue of fairness. Respondents are working hard to earn a living, and they believe that if able-bodied people are receiving welfare benefits, they should be working hard to improve their lives. This stipulation no longer exists as a result of the Obama Administration's action of waiving the work requirements in the 1996 welfare reform legislation.

Improving Medicaid in order to Better Care for the Vulnerable

Millions of Americans depend on Medicaid, a program which has grown drastically in recent years and is set to expand even more under President Obama's healthcare law. While costs continue to surge, we have to ask: where will America find the money to pay for this? At the same time, it's become clear that Medicaid does not deliver an acceptable level of care to those who depend on it—as more than 30 percent of primary care doctors and specialists are forced to refuse new Medicaid patients because of low reimbursement rates. If we overload the system, we're not able to provide help for anyone. Let's strengthen this program for those who depend on it, and bring its costs in line for the taxpayers who are expected to foot the bill. We can do this by giving states the flexibility to design Medicaid plans that meet their people's needs. It's worked in several states already, with improved outcomes, high patient satisfaction and lowered costs. Let's take this ingenuity and compassion, and put it to work strengthening Medicaid.

YG Network Poll Data:

80% are concerned that inflation adjusted Medicaid spending in 2013 is roughly twice what the United States spent ten years ago (March poll).

Conservatives: 89% concerned, 47% extremely concerned

Moderates: 79% concerned, 31% extremely concerned

Liberals: 71% concerned, 26% extremely concerned

56% want to give governors more flexibility with the federal Medicaid program so they can target resources on sicker people and give healthier recipients cheaper basic coverage (May poll).

Conservatives: 54%

Moderates: 64%

Liberals: 53%

YG Network Dial Tests: Protecting the poor and vulnerable comports with respondents' values, but they are concerned about the rapid expansion of the Medicaid program under Obamacare, because they do not know where the extra money to pay for an additional 27 million people will come from and what impact that could have on the program.

WHAT:

WHY:

Cost

"Medicaid has grown drastically, especially in the last decade—by 64 percent. Medicaid is about to expand even more, thanks to the President's healthcare law. Currently about 56 million people are covered by Medicaid. By 2020 it will cover almost 83 million people. Where are we going to get the money to pay for this?"

Respondents are concerned about the rapid expansion of the Medicaid program under Obamacare, because they do not know where the extra money to pay for an additional 27 million people will come from and what impact that could have on the program.

Access to Doctors

"While Medicaid costs surge, recipients are having another problem: finding doctors who will see them. More than 30 percent of primary care doctors and specialists will not accept new Medicaid patients, according to a recent study. Most of the time doctors incur a loss when they see Medicaid patients. One doctor even said it would be cheaper to treat Medicaid patients for free than it is to apply for Medicaid reimbursements."

Respondents want Medicaid recipients to be able to find doctors who will see them so they can get the health care they need. It is important to focus on how unfair it is that Medicaid recipients may have difficulty finding doctors who will see them because they rely on the program for their health care needs.

Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable

"Unsustainable expansion of an already broken system threatens Medicaid's ability to do what it was set up to do: serve the poor and vulnerable. As President Obama says, poor children, grandparents, kids with autism and Down syndrome and other disabilities—'these are the people who count on Medicaid.' We need to reform Medicaid so they can continue to count on it. Because if we overwhelm the system, we're not able to provide help for anyone. We need to construct a Medicaid health system that delivers essential health services and better outcomes while responsibly managing costs."

Protecting the poor and vulnerable comports with respondents' values, but right now, they are concerned that the rate of growth in the Medicaid program is unsustainable. They are concerned that if the program is overwhelmed, the people who rely on the program the most will not have access to the health care they need.

WHAT:

WHY:

Empowering States

"Many governors have complained that they could improve services and save money, if only Washington would give them more flexibility. Our idea for reforming Medicaid is for the federal government to return Medicaid dollars to the individual states and empower them to develop their own plans. After all, different states have different needs. By empowering states to creatively customize their systems as they see fit, Medicaid can be made more personal, and promote improved health outcomes. This should be our focus."

Respondents agree that providing individual states with more flexibility to develop their own plans would improve Medicaid and promote improved health outcomes. While Tea Party respondents strongly agreed with this argument, moderate Independents responded less favorably to the idea of empowering states to develop their own Medicaid plans.

State Flexibility

"A few states, such as Rhode Island, Indiana, and Florida, have obtained certain waivers from the federal government in order to reform their Medicaid programs. They've had success both in improved outcomes and controlled costs. Rhode Island has slowed its growth in Medicaid spending while providing more efficient and more coordinated care. Indiana's health care plans for uninsured low-income residents also have improved quality of care; 94 percent of participants have expressed satisfaction with the program. Florida has been piloting a Medicaid overhaul in five major counties for over six years. Recipients can choose among different insurance plans and can receive cash incentives for healthy behavior, like quitting smoking. The state has saved \$118 million a year, with improved health outcomes and 83 percent higher satisfaction rates for those in the program. When the program is implemented statewide, Florida expects to save almost a billion dollars a year. Giving states flexibility works. We should be striving to replicate these results across the country."

Respondents agree that flexibility has been working in some states, resulting in both improved outcomes and controlled costs. While Tea Party respondents strongly agreed with this, be aware that moderate Independents expressed some skepticism about the ability of states to successfully develop and run their own Medicaid plans.

Improving Medicaid

"Let's do what's right for all Americans by producing Medicaid reform that controls costs while it coordinates care and improves access to physicians. Let's put American compassion and ingenuity to work to improve Medicaid."

Improving health care for poor people comports with the values of respondents. They want Medicaid to continuously improve so that it is helping those that it is intended to help while keeping costs under control.

Effective, Locally-Run Job Training

There's no better ingredient for a middle class life than a well-paying job. But finding a job—finding the right job—can be a huge challenge. Our economy is not only weak, it's changing and many manufacturing jobs are moving overseas, leaving Americans with jobs that just don't pay enough to sustain a middle class lifestyle. Too often, the hardest-hit Americans are blue-collar workers without college degrees, whose experience often doesn't match up with what local employers are looking for. While the federal government spends \$18 billion every year on job training, that money is spread across nine different departments and thirty different programs. As a result, it's used too inefficiently to make a difference for most Americans who need it. That's why we need to cut through the duplication and red tape, and provide Americans with much-needed job training, run by local leaders who understand the needs of local employers.

YG Network Poll Data:

72% approve of turning over the numerous different federal job training programs to the states, where local officials are closer to their employment needs (May poll).

Conservatives: 82%

Moderates: 73%

Liberals: 60%

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents recognize that our economy is changing and that it is very important to have the skills that match the available jobs in a high tech economy. Respondents support the SKILLS Act because it reduces waste by taking so many overlapping programs and uniting them into a single Workforce Investment Fund. Simply rooting out waste and helping those who want to benefit from job training is very important to respondents.

WHAT:

WHY:

A Well-paying Job is Important

"A vital ingredient for a middle class life is a well-paying job. But finding a good job—finding the right job—can be a challenge. With manufacturing work moving overseas, the number of high-paying factory jobs with good benefits has drastically declined. Many of the new jobs being created in today's economy, such as those in food service and retail, don't pay enough to sustain a middle class lifestyle."

Respondents are concerned about the future as the well-paying jobs of the past have disappeared in recent years.

Increasing opportunity

"Hardest hit are unemployed blue-collar workers without college degrees. Often these Americans can't get a well-paying job because they lack the experience employers are looking for. Their experience no longer matches the available jobs in a high tech economy. But with the right training, they would have increased opportunity in a variety of fields. They could become registered nurses and medical assistants, heating and cooling system installers, computer support specialists, accounting clerks, or information technicians. Now, more than ever, it's crucial that we have effective job training programs to help Americans who are eager to get back to work."

Respondents recognize that our economy is changing and that it is very important to have the skills that match the available jobs in a high tech economy. They know that having the right training increases opportunities for them and having the right skills can lead to a well-paying job.

Workforce development programs

"Actually, we've had many workforce development programs since at least the 1960s. The most recent one is the Workforce Investment Act, last authorized in 1998. It provides federal funding for workforce development activities. It was intended to create a one-stop shop for access to training and employment services for a wide range of workers. But we have to ask an important question: Do these programs work? According to a 2011 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal by analyst James Bovard, 'If federal job training efforts worked, Congress would not have thrown out the programs it has created every decade or so and enacted new ones.'"

Respondents are skeptical that training programs work. This is highlighted by two key points: first, respondents see Congress getting rid of old training programs and replacing them with new programs, which suggests that the programs are not working effectively. Second, only a handful of respondents told us that they or someone they know has benefited from a job-training program. Therefore, most are hearing about all this money being spent, but they are not seeing positive results.

WHAT:

WHY:

Duplicative Job Training Programs

"The federal government spends about \$18 billion every year for nine departments to administer more than 30 programs. Almost all of those programs overlap in some way, providing duplicate services to duplicate populations. We can't afford that kind of waste. We are spending billions of dollars on programs that are not helping the people that they need to help. It's not fair to taxpayers, and it's definitely not fair to the people who need jobs. In fact, President Obama criticized the system in his 2012 State of the Union Address. He urged Congress to simplify the 'maze of confusing training programs.'"

Respondents believe that the federal government wastes too much money and that there are too many overlapping programs that are not helping the people they are intended to help. They think it is unfair that billions of taxpayer dollars are being spent on programs that are not helping those who need it.

The SKILLS Act

"To improve job training for the millions of Americans still looking for work, the House of Representatives passed the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act, also known simply as the SKILLS Act. The SKILLS Act reauthorizes and updates the Workforce Investment Act to make sure that government dollars are responsibly spent. The SKILLS Act takes the overlapping programs and unites them into a single Workforce Investment Fund, with a higher level of accountability built in. Right now people using these programs have to navigate an arbitrary and time-consuming bureaucracy before they can access training. For instance, they are required to go through a process that includes resume assistance and career counseling, even if all they really need for a new job is training."

Respondents support the SKILLS Act because it reduces waste by taking so many overlapping programs and uniting them into a single Workforce Investment Fund. Simply rooting out waste and helping those who want to benefit from job training is very important to respondents.

Efficient Training Programs

"The SKILLS Act cuts through the red tape so that workers can enter training programs, and ultimately the work force, as quickly as possible."

Respondents want these training programs to work effectively—without so much government red tape—so people can get the training they need to enter the work force.

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>Bringing Colleges & Local Employers together</p> <p><i>“The SKILLS Act also eases the application process for community and technical colleges to be included in the list of eligible training providers. The role of local employers in the training process will be strengthened under this act. If workers are being trained in skills that nearby businesses actually need, they won’t have to uproot their families to find a job.”</i></p>	<p>This resonated with respondents because they like the idea that we would work to match those obtaining skills in community and technical colleges with local employers who are looking to hire people with those skills.</p>
<p>Locally-run training programs</p> <p><i>“Much of the administration of the program will be handled at the state level, since the people and resources closest to a problem are the ones best equipped to deal with it. Americans need these updates to the Workforce Investment Act so that it’s easier for them to get back to work. But while this legislation affects the entire nation, its impact must take place locally. State and local officials, as well as employers in a given region, understand their communities’ needs better than any person in a distant Washington office ever could.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents agree with the idea that training programs should be run locally by state and local officials and employers who have a better understanding of their communities’ needs. They believe that training programs run locally would be more successful because there is more accountability at the local level.</p>
<p>Getting results now</p> <p><i>“Unemployed Americans can’t afford for us to cling to wasteful, complicated government programs. They want to get the training they need now. They deserve a smart, effective program to provide them with better opportunities for employment. Let’s get American workers the training they need, so they can get back to work, where they want to be.”</i></p>	<p>Respondents want the taxpayer money that is being spent on these programs to work effectively, and they strongly disapprove of government waste.</p>

Giving Hourly Workers the Flexibility to Trade Overtime Pay for Family Time

While there are plenty of situations where working parents need the extra cash that comes from overtime, there are other instances where what you really need is extra time. We can make things easier for middle class parents by letting employers give workers the option to use their overtime pay for paid time off. The Working Families Flexibility Act would allow hourly employees a choice between cash wages and comp time for overtime hours worked—meaning workers have more control over their time and more freedom to meet their own families’ needs.

YG Network Dial Tests: We learned through our dial tests that to be even more effective at demonstrating the need for this policy, it’s important to emphasize that this is voluntary on the employee’s part and that it gives hourly workers the same flexibility many salaried workers already enjoy. Respondents agree that the face of our workforce has changed and that families may require more flexible work schedules than they have needed in the past, which is why they find the Working Families Flexibility Act so appealing.

WHAT:

WHY:

Updating the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938

"Sometimes laws outlive their usefulness. One of those laws, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, prevents hourly workers from receiving comp time in exchange for overtime work. Comp time is vacation time equal to one-and-a-half times the overtime you worked. An update to this Great Depression labor law would allow hourly workers to enjoy the benefits of comp time. They could use comp time for vacation, to attend their children's activities, to care for aging parents, or for anything they need. This would be a great way to provide workers with more flexibility. Because while there are some situations where you need extra cash, there are other instances where what you really need is extra time."

Respondents agree that sometimes our laws outlive their usefulness and need to be updated to adjust to a changing society.

A Changing Workforce

"When the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed, most fathers worked while most mothers stayed home. That's not the face of today's workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 59% of married-couple families with children have both parents employed. And 67% of single mothers with children, and 81% of single fathers with children, are employed. When children get sick, or have doctor's appointments, or have events at school, mom or dad has to take off work. Right now that means they have to use vacation days or sick leave. Many workers have to meet the needs of aging parents, often from long distance. Comp time would give them extra flexibility to take care of these family needs without whittling away their vacation time."

Respondents agree that the face of our workforce has changed and that families may require more flexible work schedules than they have needed in the past, which is why they find the Working Families Flexibility Act so appealing.

The Working Families Flexibility Act

"If Congress really cares about making things easier for middle class parents, it should allow employers to give workers the option to use overtime pay for paid time off. Congress should pass the Working Families Flexibility Act, which would give hourly employees these same options that salaried workers and government employees already enjoy. The act would allow employees a choice between cash wages and comp time for overtime hours worked."

Respondents believe that hourly workers should enjoy the same choices that salaried workers and government employees already have.

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>Employee Protections</p> <p><i>"All the existing employee protections in current law will be preserved, including the 40-hour work week and how overtime compensation is accrued. And there are additional protections. For instance, employees who want to receive cash overtime wages would continue to do so. No employee can be forced to take comp time instead of overtime pay."</i></p>	<p>Respondents would need to have confidence that our well-established labor laws would remain intact, and that workers really would have the flexibility that this proposed law promises. It's important to emphasize that this is voluntary.</p>
<p>Cashing Out</p> <p><i>"Workers would be free to 'cash out' their accrued comp time whenever they choose. And at the end of the year the employer would have to pay cash wages for any unused comp time."</i></p>	<p>Respondents like the idea of having the flexibility to "cash out" any comp time whenever an employee chooses to do so.</p>
<p>Written Agreement</p> <p><i>"The act protects employees by requiring the employer and the employee to complete a written agreement to use comp time, entered into knowingly and voluntarily by the employee. Where the employee is represented by a union, the agreement to take comp time must be part of the collective bargaining agreement negotiated between the union and the employer."</i></p>	<p>Requiring a written agreement between an employee and an employer is a safeguard that would allow an employee to have confidence that he or she would be treated fairly and not lose workplace protections.</p>
<p>Providing Workers With More Control</p> <p><i>"Workers face many personal demands. The Working Families Flexibility Act would give them more control over their time, and more freedom to meet their own and their families' needs."</i></p>	<p>Respondents like the freedom of being able to choose between comp time and overtime pay.</p>

WHAT:

WHY:

A Real-life Example

"Karen DeLoach is a bookkeeper from Montgomery, Alabama who wants to use her overtime to take care of aging parents and sick family members. She recently testified before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce about the real-life consequences of the current, inflexible law, and in favor of the Working Families Flexibility Act. She said of the proposed legislation, 'I keep hearing the opposition to this is that employers are going to take advantage of employees. If I've said I want my overtime to be paid back to me in time, rather than in money, then I'm making that choice.' It's only right that our laws governing the workplace catch up to the realities of today's workers."

This is an effective example of someone who would benefit from having the choice between comp time and overtime pay. The woman in this example also dispels some of the concerns that critics of this proposed law would discuss in a set of arguments against this proposal. "Choice" is the key word here.

Improving Education & Preparing a 21st Century Workforce

Promoting Affordable & Accessible Higher Education

Education is so important for every American—for upward mobility, quality of life, and participation in civic and social life. But according to a recent National Journal poll, while 50% of Americans believe a higher level of education is the most effective way to stay in the middle class, 49% believe paying for college is only realistic for the upper class. Therefore, it's an issue that should transcend politics at every level. Let's focus on making higher education more accessible to more Americans—and more affordable. We can do this by bringing accountability and transparency to tuition costs, encouraging states to provide accessibility with \$10,000 degrees and certainty with all-inclusive, guaranteed four-year pricing, using new technologies to lower costs, and holding schools accountable for their results.

YG Network Poll Data:

87% agree that “college tuition costs and the level of student debt are too high and need to be reduced” (May poll).

Conservatives: 84% agree
Moderates: 89% agree
Liberals 89% agree

89% approve of requiring school budgets to be posted online so parents can see where money is being spent in their child's school (May poll).

Conservatives: 90% approve
Moderates: 93% approve
Liberals: 85% approve.

78% approve of encouraging community colleges and state universities to offer four year, \$10,000 degrees (May poll).

Conservatives: 76% approve
Moderates: 78% approve
Liberals: 81% approve

72% approve of increasing online college courses as a way to reduce the cost of college tuition (May poll).

Conservatives: 72% approve

Moderates: 74% approve

Liberals: 71% approve

YG Network Focus Group Data:

"Higher education is too expensive and is putting too much burden on kids."

– Swing participant, Minneapolis

"If we want to remain a competitive country, then yes [the federal government should work to reduce the cost of higher education.]"

– Swing participant, Phoenix

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents value education, and the idea that people should pursue their dreams. Respondents have seen college costs spiral out of control over the past several years and they strongly support the idea of understanding the causes of tuition inflation. For them, this is an issue of transparency, accountability, and fairness. In their view, colleges and universities are doing a poor job controlling costs and the federal aid that colleges and universities receive drives up tuition prices. It is not fair to taxpayers and it is not fair to young people who are trying to improve their lives through higher education.

WHAT:

WHY:

<p>Our Hopes For Our Children</p> <p><i>"What do we want for our children? I think it's fair to say that Americans want similar things. We want them to have happy childhoods, receive a good education, get good jobs, and live out their dreams. We want them to grow up with a strong sense of who we are as a people and the ties that bind us together as a nation. That story begins at home, but a large chunk of it is written at school."</i></p>	<p>Respondents value education, and the idea that people should pursue their dreams. This speaks to the heart of those values.</p>
<p>Education policy</p> <p><i>"We've got a lot riding on the educational establishment. The learning and formation our children receive at every level of their education sets them on a path that can determine what kind of jobs they will get; and what kind of lives they'll lead; and what kind of citizens they'll become. That will determine what kind of country we all will live in. So it's crucial that we examine federal education policy at every level. Let's focus on making higher education more accessible to more Americans, and more affordable."</i></p>	<p>It's important to focus on the importance of education policy on our lives. Respondents believe that having the right federal policy at every education level is very important, and making higher education more accessible and more affordable should be our focus.</p>
<p>New Technologies</p> <p><i>"New technologies need to play a role in accessibility. More colleges and universities are expanding their online course offerings and credit-by-exam options to accommodate more non-traditional students. The government should encourage the development of demanding, rigorous online courses in appropriate subjects."</i></p>	<p>Respondents believe that new technologies can play an important role in higher education accessibility, though some did express doubts regarding the quality of online classes, so it is important to emphasize that we are talking about demanding, rigorous courses. Additionally, some Tea Party respondents expressed concern about the federal government's role in this process.</p>
<p>Budget Details</p> <p><i>"It's no secret that college costs are skyrocketing. What is a secret is why these costs keep going up. It's only fair that the students and families paying the bills know how their tuition and fees are spent. That's why we should require any college that accepts federal funds to make their budget details available online. That way, students and parents are finally empowered with the transparency they deserve, and administrators are held accountable for their spending decisions."</i></p>	<p>Respondents think that students and their families deserve to know how their tuition dollars are being spent. This is an issue of accountability and transparency.</p>

WHAT:

WHY:

Increasing accessibility

"Community colleges are a great and affordable option for associate degrees, vocational training, and continuing education. We should be encouraging community colleges and state universities to offer four-year, \$10,000 degrees, so we can make higher education more accessible to more Americans."

Respondents strongly support making higher education more affordable and accessible to more Americans. Recognize that some respondents may question whether a \$10,000 degree will provide a high-enough quality education.

All-inclusive, Guaranteed Pricing For Four Years

"Freshmen often start college with tuition at one price level; four years later the price has gone up, often substantially. Surprise fees, such as activity fees, as well as the cost of textbooks, significantly add to the total cost of college. Schools should be encouraged to offer competitive, all-inclusive pricing, guaranteed for all four years."

Increasing and unpredictable tuition from year to year is an issue that some respondents have personally experienced. Respondents think that it is only fair that the cost of education is clear and stable so students and their families can adequately prepare for paying for college.

Helping Students Reach Their Goals

"We also need to do more to help students reach their goal of successfully completing their education. At more than 500 colleges and universities, students are more likely to default on their student loans than to graduate. When it comes to the success of their students, colleges and universities that accept federal grants and subsidized loans should be held accountable. They need to do more to help their students, or we will limit their access to federal grants and subsidized loans."

Respondents believe that colleges and universities are not doing enough to help students reach their goal of successfully completing their education. Respondents believe that schools should be held accountable to do so, especially because they are accepting federal grants and subsidized loans.

WHAT:

WHY:

Tuition Increases and Federal Aid

“College is expensive. And of course we want to help students with their college tuition. But it seems like the more federal aid colleges and universities get, the more the prices go up. Too often, taxpayer funds intended to help students obtain higher education instead end up supporting an ever-growing bureaucracy of college administrators, who in turn raise tuition in order to fund their own salaries and pet projects. We need to have an honest conversation about the role of federal aid and tax incentives in driving up tuition prices. Instead of asking taxpayers to pay higher taxes to fund increased federal aid, students should be asking their college administrations: Why are my tuition rates going up so much?”

Respondents have seen college costs spiral out of control over the past several years and they strongly support the idea of understanding the causes of tuition inflation. For them, this is an issue of transparency, accountability, and fairness. In their view, colleges and universities are doing a poor job controlling costs and the federal aid that colleges and universities receive drives up tuition prices. It is not fair to taxpayers and it is not fair to young people who are trying to improve their lives through higher education.

Higher Education Tax Credits

“Families have enough to worry about as they budget for higher education costs. The IRS, for example, shouldn’t be making things even more complicated. We should replace the current complex and burdensome web of higher education tax credits with a single, simpler provision to assist eligible students and families, whether they are pursuing skills training or a university degree.”

Respondents support the idea of simplifying our tax code, especially for those who are working to improve their lives through higher education.

The Importance of Education

“Education is so important for every American: for upward mobility, for quality of life, for participation in civic and social life. America is a land rich with opportunity for anyone willing to work for it. Our discussions about education policy should transcend politics and special interests, and focus on giving our children and young people the tools they need to seize those opportunities. The strength of our nation and our people depends on it.”

This language summarizes the entire argument for promoting affordable, accessible higher education.

Making Washington Work For Americans

Cutting Through Washington's Unnecessary, Job-Killing Red Tape

Did you know there are more than 160,000 pages of federal regulations? We all demand clean air and water, and rules are necessary—but Washington has gone overboard with too many rules that are too hard to understand, and too costly to comply with. The Obama Administration alone has added over 11,000 pages of new regulations to the Federal Register. Too often, Washington over-regulation puts small businesses at a disadvantage, leading to lower salaries, lost jobs and even shuttered doors. Let's make sure Washington regulations pass the common-sense test by requiring new rules to pass an up-or-down vote in Congress.

YG Network Poll Data:

By a 55% to 38% margin, to strengthen the middle class, respondents favor reducing government regulations and lowering taxes over increasing federal spending on infrastructure, green energy and early childhood education (May poll).

Conservatives: 82%/13%
Moderates: 48%/44%
Liberals: 27%/67%

By a 52% to 39% margin, respondents prefer reducing regulations to help businesses grow and increase worker take home pay over more regulations to protect consumers and the environment and to increase workplace safety (May poll).

Conservatives: 76%/17%
Moderates: 47%/44%;
Liberals: 29%/62%

64% approve of having elected lawmakers, rather than unelected bureaucrats, approve regulations with an economic impact of \$100 million or more (May poll).

Conservatives: 73%
Moderates: 60%
Liberals: 59%

YG Network Focus Group Data:

While reducing regulations polled well, we learned from our focus groups that it is important to make a clear connection—without resorting to jargon—between regulations and their impact on jobs, wages, and consumer prices.

“It’s going to affect the middle class because there will be fewer jobs out there, but some regulations are essential.”

– Swing participant, Manassas

“What are regulatory costs?”

– Tea Party participant, Manassas

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents support having some regulations, but they believe that having excessive regulations is harmful to the economy. Respondents support the idea of Congress having to approve regulatory rules that will have significant economic effects.

WHAT:

WHY:

Regulations Are Burdensome

"Burdensome regulations reduce salaries, reduce the numbers of employees, and shutter businesses, which means even more Americans out of work. Where is the concern for ordinary Americans? A recent study from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce details how various EPA regulations would have an impact on worker incomes equivalent to the annual loss of tens of thousands of jobs. There are so many regulations that it's getting to the point that it's too hard to start a small business, or for current businesses to hire new employees. If you want to start a landscaping business, all you should need is a lawnmower, not an accountant and a lawyer to help you hack through all the red tape before setting up shop."

This is designed to focus on the ways in which burdensome regulations negatively impact workers, business owners, those who want to start their own businesses, and the economy as a whole. Respondents support having some regulations, but they believe that having excessive regulations is harmful to the economy.

Presidential Over-reach

"In his last State of the Union Address, President Obama promised that if Congress wouldn't act on his agenda, he would do it himself, through bureaucratic rules and regulations. It is wrong for him to go around Congress and act on his own. Our Constitutional system of checks and balances is meant to ensure that the President can't do whatever he wants."

Respondents support our Constitutional system of checks and balances, and they do not want any one person making all of the decisions. Having that type of government would go against our democratic values.

The REINS Act

"Under the proposed REINS Act (REINS stands for Regulations from the Executive In Need of Scrutiny), new major rules can't take effect without approval from Congress. Major rules would be those that would have significant economic effects, or rules that would cost the economy at least \$100 million a year. Congress of course is famous for its gridlock. Provisions in the REINS Act would ensure that rules would not be killed by Washington maneuvering employed in the service of special interest groups. Major rules would have a straight up or down vote within a certain time frame. The REINS Act would increase accountability. And, hopefully, it would begin to disentangle the American economy from the winding web of over-regulation."

Respondents support the idea of Congress having to approve regulatory rules that will have significant economic effects, or rules that would cost the economy at least \$100 million a year. Respondents want our elected leaders to be accountable for supporting or opposing these types of regulatory rules.

Holding Washington Accountable

Washington should work for Americans—not work Americans over. But too often, Americans who are singled out by federal agencies like the IRS feel like they're guilty until proven innocent. This is wrong and unfair. Let's protect Americans who are forced to deal with the IRS or other federal agencies by requiring federal employees to inform citizens of their rights before subjecting them to an audit or similar actions.

Another area where we can better hold Washington bureaucrats accountable is in how they spend our money. It's reasonable for every federal agency to reduce the amount it spends on overhead like supplies, travel and conferences. This is especially clear after it was revealed that the IRS has spent \$50 million taxpayer dollars on things like luxury hotels, sports tickets, dance classes and alcohol—often without even fully accounting for these irresponsible expenditures. Why shouldn't federal agencies like the IRS hold themselves to the same standards they demand of everyday Americans?

The fact is, they should. And when they don't, they should be held accountable and punished—just like the rest of us.

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents believe that the federal government has too much power and is not held accountable for its actions. Respondents believe that government should work for us, but they do not see that happening. This erodes their trust in government.

WHAT:

WHY:

Government Abuse

"People who have been audited by the IRS often say the same thing: 'It felt like I was guilty until proven innocent.' And how about those reports about Americans who have been singled out by the IRS because of their political ideology? Why does it seem like we forgo our rights as American citizens when a federal agency suspects us of something? Each year federal agencies make almost a million judgments about people's compliance with federal regulations. All too often the agency is the accuser, the investigator, and the judge. In these adjudications Americans aren't guaranteed the rights they would have in court. They do have the right to fight federal fines—if they don't mind the hassle and the expense of taking the government to court. Government should work for us, not work us over. But this doesn't seem to be the case with federal bureaucracies."

Respondents believe that the federal government has too much power and is not held accountable for its actions. Respondents believe that government should work for us, but they do not see that happening. This erodes their trust in government.

Protecting Citizens' Rights

"We need to protect Americans who are forced to deal with the IRS or other federal agencies. One proposed law would require federal employees to inform citizens of their rights before subjecting them to an audit or similar actions. They would have to let you know that you have the right to record meetings and phone conversations with federal agents and auditors. Agencies might be less likely to bully us or unfairly change the ground rules of the audit if they know every word is being recorded. Did you know you already have the right to be represented by an attorney when dealing with federal agencies? If you weren't aware of that, perhaps it would show concern for ordinary Americans if the government informed them of these and other rights at the beginning of an audit."

Respondents strongly believe that when they are dealing with federal agencies, they want to be treated fairly, and they believe that they should be made aware of their rights before being subjected to an investigation or legal action by a federal agency. They support these proposals to make federal agencies more accountable.

Government Overspending

"One challenge to our country is the huge amount of debt due to government overspending. We all have to tighten our belts. People have to do that with their families when times are tough; the government should do it as well."

Respondents are tired of our government's overspending. They know they cannot act that way in their own lives, and they believe that the government should be more responsible with our tax dollars. This tees up the next statement well.

WHAT:

WHY:

Reducing Government Waste

"A reasonable and fair proposal is that every federal agency reduce the amount of money it spends on overhead, like energy, supplies, travel, and conferences. For instance, over a three-year period the IRS spent 50 million taxpayer dollars on things like luxury hotel rooms, baseball tickets, dance classes, and alcohol. The IRS has admitted that many of these expenses were 'inappropriate.' And the IRS didn't keep full financial records of the conferences, so the costs may be even higher. Try saying that at your own tax audit. The Government Accountability Office, which is an independent agency designed to provide oversight into policy effectiveness, has identified what could be up to hundreds of billions of dollars in redundancy and duplication. That's an easy place to begin to get our fiscal house in order."

Respondents strongly oppose government waste, and they believe that there is spending in federal agencies' budgets that could be cut without harming the missions of those agencies.

Solyndra

"In the last few years, Washington has sent billions of dollars in subsidies to the politically connected. The Obama administration loaned more than half a billion dollars to Solyndra, a solar panel manufacturer, at outrageously low interest rates. Solyndra later went bankrupt, leaving taxpayers holding the bag. When Solyndra first applied for the loan, appraisers warned that it looked too risky. Obama officials fast-tracked the loan process anyway. How did Solyndra get such a great deal? It might be because one of Solyndra's biggest investors was also a big fundraiser for Obama's presidential campaign. Solyndra is not the only example of government investments gone wrong, unfortunately. Beacon Power Corp., EnerDel, and Abound Solar are other companies that have filed for bankruptcy after receiving substantial federal funds or loans. Deals like these are unacceptable and unfair to taxpayers."

This effectively ties together two concerns that respondents repeatedly discussed: government waste and crony capitalism. Providing background information about Solyndra makes this even more effective because not everyone is familiar with what happened to that company just by hearing about "Solyndra." However, when background information is provided, the message really resonates with respondents.

Picking Winners and Losers

"It's not fair for the government to pick winners and losers in the marketplace, especially when our nation's leaders are picking their friends to be the winners. Government bureaucrats entrusted with public safety and money should be held to an especially high standard."

Respondents are tired of the crony capitalism that goes on in the federal government, and they want to have fairness in the marketplace. When the federal government picks winners and losers in the marketplace, that principle is violated.

WHAT:

WHY:

Lois Lerner

"Recently Lois Lerner, who at the time was director of the tax-exempt organizations division of the IRS, revealed that her division had improperly targeted conservative and religious groups for scrutiny. When she refused to resign, she was placed on administrative leave, with full pay and benefits. That's hardly fair."

Respondents strongly oppose the idea that Lois Lerner could act improperly in her position of power at the IRS and still receive full pay and benefits. Respondents told us that they would not be treated the same way if they were to act improperly in their positions of employment—and that's not fair.

Government Employees Who Break The Rules

"Another proposed law would make it easier to discipline and even dismiss government employees who break rules, violate the rights of Americans, or, worst of all, endanger lives. The federal government should be allowed to place on unpaid leave employees under investigation for serious offenses. Implementing these changes would make things fairer for taxpayers. Both houses of Congress should pass them, and the President should sign them into law."

Respondents do not see any accountability in their government. They are seeing that government employees are allowed to act irresponsibly and still get paid—even for serious offenses. Respondents told us that they would lose their jobs if they were to act in this manner in their own positions of employment. Respondents value equality and fairness. When government employees are allowed to break the rules without repercussions, those principles are violated.

Expanding NIH Research to Fight Children’s Diseases by Not Subsidizing Presidential Campaigns or Party Conventions

Every four years, the national political parties throw themselves lavish events in the form of their national conventions. But while this is well known, many Americans may not realize that tens of millions of taxpayer dollars—designated by Americans who check a voluntary presidential campaign funding box on their tax returns—help pay for these political extravaganzas. YG Network’s modest proposal: instead of using taxpayer funds to underwrite national party conventions, let’s let taxpayers check a voluntary box on their tax returns to fund pediatric research to help American families struggling with debilitating diseases like autism, Down Syndrome, and leukemia.

YG Network Dial Tests: Respondents believe that the “Kids First Research Act” is a much better way to spend taxpayer dollars than on campaigns and conventions. When children are suffering, they want to help, and the “Kids First Research Act” provides them with a fast and easy way to do just that.

WHAT:

WHY:

Publicly Funding Campaigns & Conventions

"With all the demands on our federal budget, and record levels of debt and deficit spending, those taxpayer dollars spent on campaigns and conventions could be better spent elsewhere." AND "And the time is ripe to make this change. Americans are voting against public campaign funding through their tax returns. In 2010, only 7% of taxpayers checked the box on their 1040s to earmark funds for presidential campaigns. The number of box checkers has been declining steadily almost since the program began in 1976. Clearly it's time to end the public funding of presidential campaigns. Americans don't want to pay for it, and candidates aren't using it. In the last campaign, neither major presidential candidate took the money."

Respondents do not believe that we should publicly fund campaigns and conventions because it is not a good use of taxpayer dollars. They believe that parties and candidates have proven that they are able to raise the money they need privately.

Caring For Children

"While the party faithful party on, children and families across America struggle with life-limiting and debilitating diseases such as autism, Down syndrome, and leukemia. Research has vastly improved management and treatment of these and other conditions, but we can always do better, and ultimately we'd like to find cures. But that costs money. The 'Kids First Research Act,' which has support from both parties in Congress, would eliminate the presidential campaign funding checkbox on tax returns. In its place would be a new voluntary checkbox authorizing spending for pediatric research at the National Institutes of Health. The legislation would increase federal funding for research to identify causes of and develop treatments for diseases that affect children. Our children's health should be a national priority." AND "Those dollars could be better spent helping our children fight disease. These are special kids. You know some of them. Let's do what we can to give them a more normal, more hopeful, childhood."

Respondents believe that the "Kids First Research Act" is a much better way to spend taxpayer dollars than on campaigns and conventions. When children are suffering, they want to help, and the "Kids First Research Act" provides them with a fast and easy way to do just that.

METHODOLOGY:

YG NETWORK MARCH NATIONAL POLL:

This national survey of 1,000 likely 2014 general election voters was conducted by McLaughlin & Associates from March 4th to March 7th, 2013. Interview selection was random within predetermined election units. 700 interviews were conducted via landline telephone by professional interviewers. To increase coverage, this landline sample was supplemented with 300 interviews of cell-phone only users reached via the internet. These samples were then combined and structured to correlate with actual voter turnout in a nationwide general election. This poll of 1,000 likely general election voters has an accuracy of +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval.

YG NETWORK MAY NATIONAL POLL: This national survey of 1,000 likely 2014 general election voters was conducted from April 28th to April 30th, 2013. Interview selection was random within predetermined election units. 700 interviews were conducted via landline telephone by professional interviewers. To increase coverage, this landline sample was supplemented with 300 interviews of cell-phone only users reached via the internet. These samples were then combined and structured to correlate with actual voter turnout in a nationwide general election. This poll of 1,000 likely general election voters has an accuracy of +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval.

YG NETWORK FOCUS GROUPS: McLaughlin & Associates conducted a total of 8 focus groups of likely voters in 4 cities between June 24th and July 1st, 2013. In each city, one group consisted of Swing Voters and the second group consisted of Tea Party Voters.

The cities included: Phoenix, Arizona on June 24th; Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 25th; Palm Beach, Florida on June 26th; Manassas, Virginia on July 1st (only women).

These focus groups were designed to give an in-depth qualitative analysis of voter opinions. It is important to note, this is a qualitative, not a quantitative, study. The data in this report reflects the responses from just 70 focus group participants who were selected to meet strict criteria. This should be considered when reading data.

YG NETWORK DIAL TESTS: For our first round of issues—Energy, HealthCare, Medicare, Commonsense Budgeting, Middle-Class Tax Relief, Regulation, NIH Research—Presentation Testing conducted two rounds of moment-to-moment dial tests for this research with two distinct groups in each round: people who are

sympathetic to the Tea Party movement (“Tea Party respondents”) and moderate Independents (both Obama voters and Romney voters). In Round 1, we conducted the moment-to-moment dial tests in Denver, CO on July 30th with those two distinct groups. The Tea Party group contained 10 respondents, and the group of moderate Independents contained eight respondents.

This was followed by a second round of research on August 12th in Mount Laurel, NJ (suburban Philadelphia, PA) where we conducted moment-to-moment dial tests with the two distinct groups of respondents. Each group contained 12 respondents. For our second round of issues—Higher Education, Medicaid, Job Training, Holding Washington Accountable, Welfare, and Flex Time—Presentation Testing conducted two rounds of moment-to-moment dial tests for this research with two distinct groups in each round: people who are sympathetic to the Tea Party movement (“Tea Party respondents”) and moderate Independents (both Obama voters and Romney voters). In Round 1, we conducted the moment-to-moment dial tests in Tampa, FL on September 17th with those two distinct groups. The Tea Party group contained 10 respondents, and the group of moderate Independents contained 12 respondents.

This was followed by a second round of research on October 1st in Oak Brook, IL (suburban Chicago, IL) where we conducted moment-to-moment dial tests with the two distinct groups of respondents. The Tea Party group contained 13 respondents, and the group of moderate Independents contained 10 respondents.

Each group viewed a video debate featuring actresses named Jean and Carla. Jean is the conservative advocate. Carla is the liberal advocate. Respondents rated each segment on how strongly they agreed or disagreed with what they were hearing, moment-to-moment, on a zero to 100 scale. For each issue, the conservative advocate spoke first and the liberal advocate rebutted the conservative arguments. Each segment was separated by a video reminder to temporarily reset one’s dial to 50 (i.e., neutral) before the next segment started.

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