

National Poll Finds Deficit Concerns

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Tulane University and Democracy Corps, a nonprofit polling organization co-founded by faculty member James Carville, conducted a survey about the national political climate with a specific look at voters' attitudes on the deficit.

The [survey](#) found that the federal budget deficit is a growing problem for Americans. But there was a stream of mixed messages from voters. Most people polled described the deficit as a crisis □ outpacing even unemployment □ but there was little consensus on where to cut the fat.

A statistically valid 1,016 voters were polled for the survey, and the results were released during a breakfast sponsored by the *Christian Science Monitor* on March 30 at the St. Regis Hotel in Washington, D.C., to which representatives of the national media were invited. In addition to Carville and Democracy Corps co-founder Stanley Greenberg, Tulane students Seth Benzell and Claire Drake presented the survey findings and provided analysis.

The survey results show that spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and President Barack Obama's stimulus package are viewed as the leading causes of the growing budget deficit. More voters continue to blame former President George W. Bush rather than Obama for the state of the deficit, but Obama's advantage is narrowing as he assumes more responsibility for the economy. Obama continues to get mixed reviews on his economic policies with an equal number of voters seeing those policies as responsible for averting a crisis as seeing them adding to the deficit without creating jobs.

The new survey is the second joint survey by Tulane and Democracy Corps in less than a year. In May 2009, they conducted a comprehensive poll on the 2010 New Orleans mayoral election.

"This has been an excellent opportunity for our students. Both Tulane and Democracy Corps are respected organizations that I am proud to be associated with, and I hope that these last two polls are just the beginning of a longer-term relationship," said Carville, a professor of practice in the Tulane political science department.