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# The Big Generation Gap at the Polls Is Echoed in Attitudes on Budget Tradeoffs

But Public Sees Only Modest Conflict between Young and Old

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## OVERVIEW

*By Kim Parker*

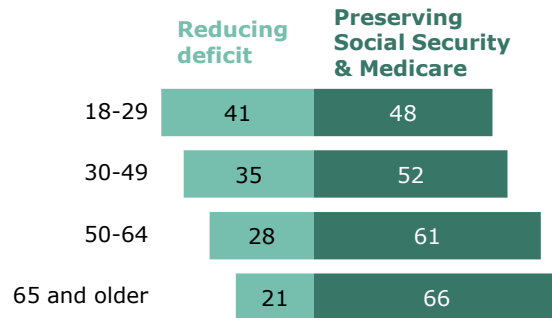
The record generation gap that played out at the voting booth in the last two presidential elections is echoed by large differences by age in attitudes about the tradeoff between reducing the federal deficit and preserving entitlements for older adults, according to a new nationwide Pew Research Center survey. Older adults by a lopsided margin (66%-21%) say that protecting Social Security and Medicare benefits is more important than reducing the federal budget deficit. Younger adults are much more evenly divided on the subject, with 48% saying that the programs for older adults are the higher priority and 41% saying deficit reduction.

The age differences are even more pronounced in response to a survey question about whether the federal government should give a higher priority to programs that benefit older adults or younger adults. Respondents ages 65 and older choose the former by a three-to-one ratio; adults ages 18 to 29 choose the latter by a three-to-two ratio.

In effect, each age group endorses priorities that reflect its generational self-interest. But to do so, each generation—especially older adults—takes a position on these young vs. old policy questions that runs contrary to its broader beliefs

### Age Influences Views on Budget Tradeoffs

*% saying ... is more important*



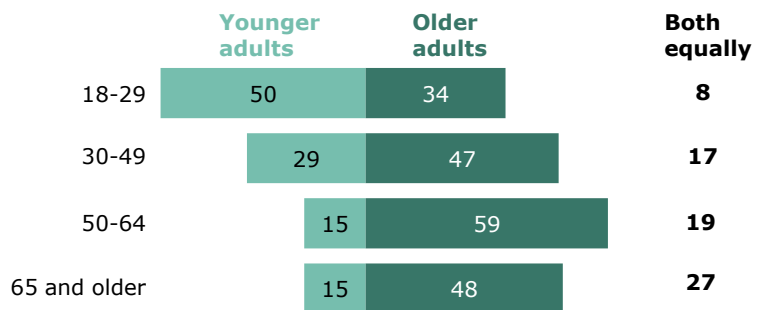
Note: Voluntary responses of "Both equally" and "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

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Q31

### Where Should the Federal Government Focus Its Resources?

*% saying programs that benefit ... should be the higher priority*



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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Q6a

about the proper role of government. In general, older adults favor a government that is smaller both in size and scope, while young adults want to see a bigger government that takes on more problems.

The National Exit Poll conducted on Election Day asked voters which came closest to their view: Government should do more to solve problems, or government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals. Voters ages 18 to 29 lean heavily toward a more activist government. Roughly six-in-ten (59%) say government should do more to solve problems while only 37% say government is doing too much. By contrast, only about one-third of voters ages 65 and older (35%) favor a more activist government, while a majority (58%) say government should do less.

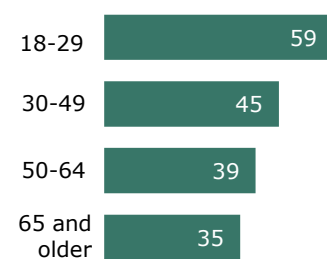
In spite of these wide gaps between young and old in policy views, the new survey, which was conducted Nov. 28 to Dec. 5, 2012, finds no indication of a broader generational war. Relatively few adults of any age group (28% overall) perceive strong conflicts between young people and older people. In fact, generational conflict ranks at the bottom of a list of potential group conflicts in the U.S. Conflicts between Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, immigrants and non immigrants and blacks and whites are judged to be much more acute.

And within families, intergenerational commitments remain strong. The vast majority (84%) of adults ages 18 to 29 say adult children have a responsibility to provide financial assistance to an elderly parent if he or she needs it. And nearly six-in-ten (58%) say it is very likely that, at some point in the future, they will be responsible for caring for an aging parent or another elderly family member.

To be sure, young adults worry about the long-term financial impact if changes are not made to Social Security and Medicare. Fully half (52%) of those ages 18 to 29 say that keeping the benefits from these programs at their current levels will place too much of a financial burden on younger generations. Only about one-third (35%) of adults ages 65 and older agree. But the young are no more likely than other age groups to embrace potential reforms to these programs that might ease the future financial burden. Solid majorities of young, middle-

### How Much Should Government Do?

*% of voters saying government should do more to solve problems*



Note: Voters were asked, "Which is closer to your view: Government should do more to solve problems, or government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals."

Source: Based on exit poll data from the National Election Pool, provided by NBC News and National Public Radio (NPR).

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aged and older adults favor increasing payroll taxes on higher income earners to raise revenues for Social Security. Similarly, the idea of reducing Social Security and Medicare benefits for higher-income seniors is broadly popular across age groups. However, when it comes to increasing the age at which adults become eligible for Social Security, a proposal that does not receive majority support overall, older adults are more supportive than any other age group.

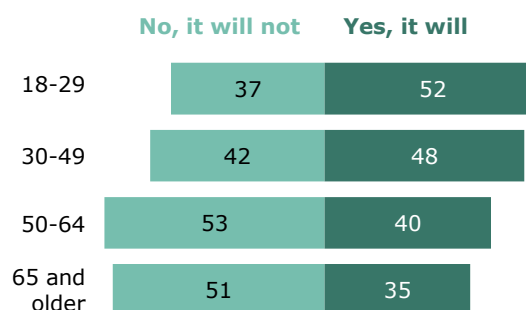
The intersection of politics and generation is complicated on these issues. Young adults tend to be the most Democratic in terms of their party identification, and they voted for Barack Obama over Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election by a 60%-to-37% margin.

Older Americans voted for Romney over Obama by a 56%-to-44% margin. The age gap in voting in the 2008 presidential election between Obama and John McCain was even wider, as 66% of voters younger than 30 supported Obama compared with 45% of voters 65 and older.

In spite of their strong leaning to Obama and the Democratic Party, the views of young adults line up more closely with those of Republicans when they are asked what is more important: taking steps to reduce the federal budget deficit or keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits as they are. Republicans are evenly divided over this, as are young adults: 45% of Republicans say deficit reduction is more important while 42% choose preserving benefits. Independents and Democrats, on the other hand, strongly favor maintaining entitlement benefits at their current levels over reducing the deficit.

### Future of Entitlement Programs: Benefit or Burden?

*If Social Security and Medicare benefits are kept at their current levels, will this put too much of a financial burden on younger generations? (%)*



Note: Voluntary responses of "Depends" and "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

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Q33

### Party Identification and Budget Tradeoffs

*% saying ... is more important*

	Reducing deficit	Preserving Social Security and Medicare	Both equally (VOL.)
Republican	45	42	10
Democrat	21	69	5
Independent	35	52	8

Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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Q31

## Old and Young Competing for Limited Federal Dollars

The proper role and scope of government was the subject of heated debate in the recent presidential election. The public has grown more skeptical about the government's reach in this era of weak economic growth and strained resources. Still, there is majority support for government intervention on behalf of the neediest citizens. In the current survey, 57% of respondents agreed that it is the responsibility of government to take care of those who can't take care of themselves, 37% disagreed.

There is broad agreement across age groups on this issue. Among those younger than 30, 60% agree the government has the responsibility to care for those who need assistance. Some 58% of those ages 30 to 64 agree with this as do 54% of those ages 65 and older. Roughly one-in-five from each age group completely agrees that the government has this responsibility.

In allocating its resources, the public clearly believes the government should give a higher priority to programs that benefit older adults (47%) rather than those that benefit younger adults (27%), although a significant share (17%) volunteers that both types of programs are equally important.

Adults younger than 30 have much different views on this issue than do their older counterparts. Only 34% of those ages 18 to 29 say programs that benefit older adults should be given a higher priority. This compares with 47% of those ages 30 to 49, and 48% of those ages 65 and older. Adults ages 50 to 64, most of whom are part of the Baby Boom generation, are more likely than any other age group to say the government should concentrate its resources on programs that benefit older adults. Fully 59% say these programs should be a higher priority, while only 15% say programs that benefit younger adults should be given a higher priority. Many in this age group have parents who are currently relying on these programs (56% have at least one living parent ages 65 or older)<sup>1</sup>, and many are on the cusp of retirement themselves.

There are also significant differences by race. By about a two-to-one margin (50%-24%) whites believe programs that benefit older adults, rather than young adults, should be given a higher priority. Blacks are more evenly divided. Four-in-ten say programs that benefit older adults should be given higher priority, 33% say programs that benefit the young deserve more attention, and another 26% say both are equally important.

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<sup>1</sup> Adults with at least one living parent ages 65 or older include those who do not have any living parents but have a stepparent ages 65 or older who played an important role in their life.

Republicans, Democrats and independents all say, on balance, programs that benefit older adults should be a higher priority than those that benefit the young. Of these three groups, Republicans are the most likely to prioritize programs that benefit the old (58% among Republicans vs. 44% of Democrats and 45% of independents).

## The Family Safety Net

Regardless of attitudes about the government's role, a majority of adults from all age groups believe that adult children have an obligation to support their aging parents. Overall, 75% of the public says adult children have a responsibility to provide financial assistance to an elderly parent if he or she needs it. Only 23% say this is not a responsibility.

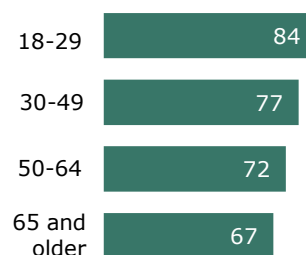
Young adults are more likely than middle-aged or older adults to say providing financial assistance to an elderly parent in need is a responsibility. Among those ages 18 to 29, 84% say this is a responsibility. The share who views this as a responsibility goes down gradually with age. Some 77% of those ages 30 to 49 say adult children have a responsibility to provide financial assistance to an elderly parent in need; 72% of those ages 50 to 64 say the same as do 67% of those ages 65 and older.

Many adults are already providing financial support to their aging parents. Overall, 32% of all adults with at least one parent ages 65 or older say they have given financial support to their parent in the past 12 months.

Adults of all ages are much more reluctant to say parents have a responsibility to support their grown children. Overall, 52% say parents have a responsibility to provide financial assistance to an adult child if he or she needs it; 44% say this is not a responsibility. This compares with 75% overall who say adult children have a responsibility to assist their aging parents.

## Adult Children and Their Aging Parents

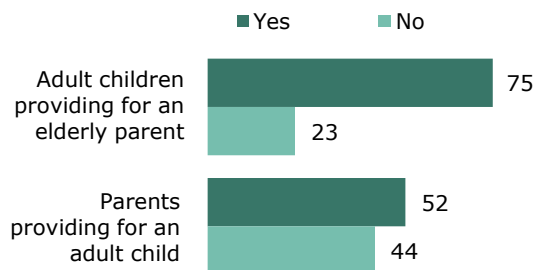
*% saying adult children have a responsibility to provide financial help to elderly parent in need*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q17b

## Intergenerational Responsibilities

*Is ... a responsibility or not? (%)*



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

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Q17a,b

Among young adults, many of whom may have found themselves in this very situation, 53% say parents have the responsibility to provide for their adult children, if their children need the support; 44% say parents do not have this responsibility. Young adults' views on this issue are nearly identical to those of their parents' generation. Among adults ages 50 to 64, 54% say parents have a responsibility to provide for their adult children, while 43% say this is not a responsibility. Adults ages 65 and older have similar views: 57% say this is a responsibility and 35% say it is not. Adults ages 30 to 49 are somewhat less likely to say this is a responsibility: 47% say it is and 51% say it is not.

## Deficit Reduction vs. Maintaining Entitlement Benefits

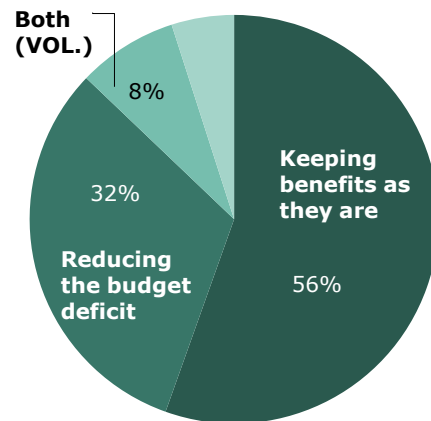
While young and older adults have similar views on the responsibilities family members have to one another, their views differ sharply on some key policy issues relating to generational responsibility. Overall, when faced with the tradeoff of taking steps to reduce the budget deficit or keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits as they are now, the public favors keeping benefits as they are now by a margin of 56% to 32%.

Young adults are closely divided on this issue: 41% say deficit reduction is more important while 48% favor keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits at their current levels. Among those ages 65 and older, fully two-thirds (66%) choose preserving entitlement benefits, while 21% say reducing the deficit is more important.

There are sharp differences on this issue along party lines as well. Republicans are evenly divided over which goal is more important: 45% say taking steps to reduce the budget deficit is more important, while 42% choose keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits at their current levels. Democrats lean heavily toward preserving these entitlement benefits. By a more than three-to-one margin (69% to 21%), Democrats say keeping benefits where they are now is more important than reducing the deficit.

### Public Leans Toward Preserving Benefits over Deficit Reduction

*% saying ... is more important*



Note: "Don't know/Refused" share is shown but not labeled.

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Q31



## The Future of Social Security and Medicare

The public's views on the future of these large entitlement programs are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, a majority says keeping benefits as they are now should be a priority, on the other hand, fully half question whether that approach is even tenable. Among all adults, 51% say it is not likely that there will be enough money in these programs to maintain current benefit levels in the future. Only 45% say it is likely there will be enough money to do this.

Views about the future solvency of these programs are closely linked to policy preferences. Those who favor deficit reduction over maintaining current benefit levels are among the most likely to doubt there will be enough money in these programs going forward: 69% of those who say reducing the deficit is more important than preserving Social Security and Medicare benefits also say it is not likely these programs will have enough money in the future to provide benefits at the current levels.

Those who favor maintaining benefits over reducing the deficit are much more confident about the future of these programs: 56% say it is likely there will be enough money in the future to provide benefits at their current levels, while 40% say the money is not likely to be there.

Perceptions of the future solvency of Social Security and Medicare also differ by age. On balance, young adults are skeptical that there will be enough money in the future if current benefits levels are maintained. Among those younger than 30, 41% say it's likely there will be enough money, while 54% say this is unlikely. Adults ages 30 to 49 have the most negative view in this regard: 61% say it is not likely that there will be enough money in the future to provide benefits at their current levels (including 25% who say this is "not at all likely").

Those ages 50 to 64 are about evenly divided on this issue: 51% say it's likely these programs will have enough money in the future and 45% say it is not likely. And those ages 65 and older are the least concerned about the future solvency of these programs. A slight majority (55%)

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### Policy Priorities Tied to Views About Solvency of Social Security, Medicare

*% saying, in the future, it is ...*

	What is more important?	
	Reducing the deficit	Keeping benefits as they are
<i>Likely/not likely there will be enough money to provide benefits at their current levels</i>		
Very/Somewhat likely	29	56
Not too/Not at all likely	69	40
DK/Refused	2	4
PEW RESEARCH CENTER		Q31, 32

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says it is likely there will be enough money in the future if current benefits levels are maintained, while 37% say this is unlikely.

There is a sharp partisan divide in perceptions about whether, in the future, benefits can be maintained at their current levels. Roughly two-thirds of Republicans (65%) say it's not likely there will be enough money in these programs in the future to provide benefits at their current levels; only 33% of Republicans say there will be enough money. Democrats are much more confident: 59% say there will be enough money in the future to pay out benefits at their current levels, while 37% say there will not.

Related to the ability of Social Security and Medicare to continue to provide benefits at their current levels is the question of whether future spending will place an undue burden on younger generations. The public is divided over this issue. Some 44% of all adults say keeping benefits at their current levels will put too much of a financial burden on younger generations. Roughly the same proportion (45%) say continued spending will not adversely impact the young.

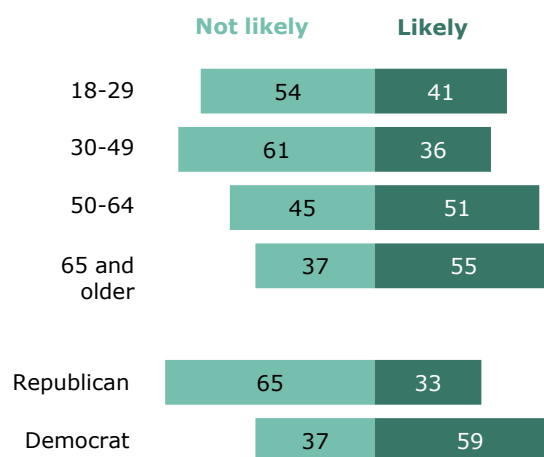
Again, views on this issue are closely related to age. However, here the gap is between those younger than 50 and those ages 50 and older. Among those ages 18 to 49, 50% say keeping spending at current levels will place too much of a burden on younger generations, while 40% say it will not. Among those ages 50 and older, only 38% say keeping benefits as they are now will burden the young, while 52% say it will not.

## Support for Entitlement Reforms

The public has mixed views on some potential reforms to the Social Security and Medicare programs. In general, there is broad support for reforms that involve reducing benefits for higher-income seniors, and most adults favor the idea of asking wealthier Americans to pay

### How Long Will the Money Last?

*% saying it is ... that there will be enough money to provide Social Security and Medicare benefits at their current levels in the future*



Note: "Likely" category combines the share saying "very" or "somewhat" likely; "Not likely" category combines the share saying "not too" or "not at all" likely.

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Q32

more in payroll taxes. There is much less support for the idea of raising the age at which people can begin to receive either of these benefits.

Half of the poll's respondents were asked about reforms to address financial concerns about the Social Security program, and the other half were asked about reforms to help shore up the Medicare program. Of the three proposals for changing Social Security tested in the survey, the most popular is the idea of raising payroll taxes on high-income earners. Two-thirds of all adults favor this proposal, while 29% oppose it. A smaller majority of adults (55%) say they would favor reducing Social Security benefits for seniors with higher incomes; 39% oppose this proposal. When asked about gradually raising the age at which people can begin to receive Social Security benefits, only 38% were in favor, while a majority (56%) opposed this idea.

The public has a similar set of views on possible reforms to the Medicare program.

Six-in-ten adults say they would favor reducing Medicare benefits for high-income seniors (33% oppose this). At the same time, only about one-third of adults (35%) say they would favor gradually raising the age of eligibility for receiving Medicare.

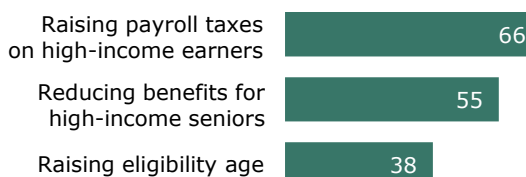
Majorities of young, middle-aged and older Americans support raising payroll taxes on high-income earners. There is no significant difference of opinion between adults ages 18 to 29 and those ages 65 and older on this issue – 64% of young adults favor this proposal as do 67% of older adults. Among those ages 30 to 64, a similar share (66%) favors this.

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## Varying Support for Proposed Reforms to Social Security and Medicare

*% saying they favor each*

### **Social Security reforms**



### **Medicare reforms**



Note: Half of the sample was asked about Social Security (n=1,257) and the other half was asked about Medicare (n=1,254).

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Q34, 35

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When it comes to reducing Social Security and Medicare benefits for higher-income seniors, similar shares from each age group say they are in favor. Some 53% of those ages 18 to 29 favor reducing Social Security benefits for seniors with higher incomes; 57% of those ages 30 to 64 favor this proposal as do 53% of older adults.

There is less agreement on the issue of raising the age of eligibility for Social Security. Older adults stand out in terms of their relative support for this proposal. Among those ages 65 and older, 49% say they would favor gradually raising the age at which adults can begin to receive benefits. This compares with 34% among those 18-29, 40% among those 30-49 and 34% among 50- to 64-year-olds. Similarly, younger adults are more likely than their older counterparts to oppose raising the age of eligibility for Medicare. While only half of adults ages 65 and older oppose this proposal, about six-in-ten of those younger than 65 oppose it.

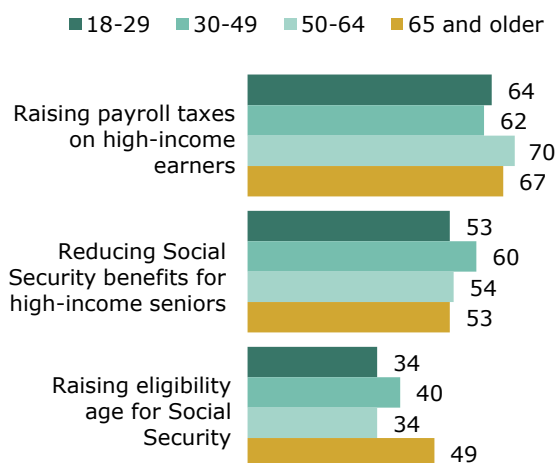
### Partisanship and Entitlement Reform

If there's one thing Republicans, Democrats and independents may be able to agree on in tackling entitlement reform it's the idea of reducing benefits – both Social Security and Medicare – for the wealthiest older Americans. About half or more from each partisan group favor reducing Social Security benefits for wealthier adults, and roughly six-in-ten from each group favor the same for Medicare benefits.

While solid majorities of Democrats (77%) and independents (70%) support raising payroll

### Support for Social Security Reforms by Age

% saying they favor each



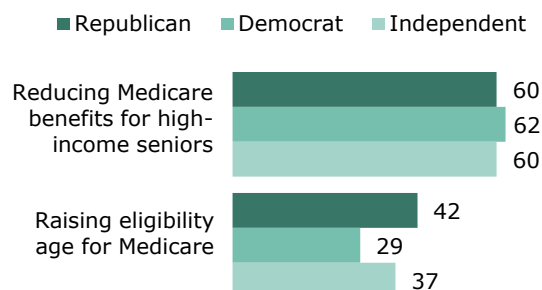
Note: Based on half sample (n=1,257)

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Q34

### Support for Medicare Reforms by Party ID

% saying they favor each



Note: Based on half sample (n=1,254)

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Q35

taxes on high-income earners to help shore up the Social Security program, only 46% of Republicans would support this measure. Republicans and independents are more supportive than Democrats of proposals to raise the age of eligibility for Social Security or Medicare. Even so, these proposals do not garner majority support from any party group.

### About the Data

**The general public survey** is based on telephone interviews conducted Nov. 28 to Dec. 5, 2012, with a nationally representative sample of 2,511 adults ages 18 and older. A total of 1,506 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline telephone and 1,005 with those contacted on their cellular phone. Data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States. Survey interviews were conducted in English and Spanish under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.

**PEW SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS**  
**NOVEMBER 2012 GENDER AND GENERATIONS SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 5, 2012**  
**TOTAL N=2,511**

**NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES GREATER THAN ZERO BUT LESS THAN 0.5 % ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (\*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS.**

**QUESTION 1 THROUGH 4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

On a different topic...

Q.5 In all countries, there are differences or conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion, in AMERICA, how much conflict is there between ... **[READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS a. THRU d. ALWAYS READ ITEM e. LAST]** ... Very strong conflicts, strong conflicts, not very strong conflicts, or there are not conflicts? **[REPEAT CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY]** In America, how much conflict is there between ... **[INSERT NEXT ITEM]** **READ IF NECESSARY:** Very strong conflicts, strong conflicts, not very strong conflicts, or there are not conflicts?

a. Young people and older people?

		Dec	Jul	GSS:	GSS:
<u>Total</u>		<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2000</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>1992</u> <sup>3</sup>
8	Very strong conflicts	10	6	10	11
20	Strong conflicts	24	19	31	31
52	Not very strong conflicts	50	56	48	43
15	There are not conflicts	12	14	7	10
1	Can't choose <b>(VOL.)</b>	1	1	4	5
3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	3	4	n/a	n/a

b. Poor people and rich people?

		Dec	Jul	GSS:	GSS:	GSS:
<u>Total</u>		<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1987</u>
22	Very strong conflicts	30	15	14	20	15
36	Strong conflicts	36	32	41	46	44
28	Not very strong conflicts	23	34	37	26	33
8	There are not conflicts	7	10	3	3	3
2	Can't choose <b>(VOL.)</b>	1	3	6	5	5
5	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	4	6	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>2</sup> The GSS questions didn't include a "Don't know/Refused" option.

<sup>3</sup> The question wording is slightly different in the 1992 GSS: "In all countries there are differences or even conflicts between..."

## QUESTION 5 CONTINUED ...

c. Blacks and whites?

		Dec	Jul
<u>Total</u>		<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>
11	Very strong conflicts	10	9
28	Strong conflicts	28	30
47	Not very strong conflicts	47	45
7	There are not conflicts	7	8
2	Can't choose (VOL.)	2	3
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	5	6

d. Immigrants and people born in the United States?

		Dec	Jul
<u>Total</u>		<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>
17	Very strong conflicts	24	18
38	Strong conflicts	38	36
32	Not very strong conflicts	26	30
6	There are not conflicts	6	8
2	Can't choose (VOL.)	1	3
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4	5

e. Democrats and Republicans?

<u>Total</u>	
47	Very strong conflicts
35	Strong conflicts
10	Not very strong conflicts
3	There are not conflicts
1	Can't choose (VOL.)
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

## ASK ALL:

Q.6 Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is the responsibility of the government to take care of those who can't take care of themselves. **(IF AGREE/DISAGREE, ASK:** Would you say you completely (agree/disagree) or mostly (agree/disagree)? **[READ IF NECESSARY:** Do you completely (agree/disagree) or mostly (agree/disagree) that it is the responsibility of the government to take care of those who can't take care of themselves.]

<u>Total</u>	
57	<b>NET Agree</b>
21	Completely agree
37	Mostly agree
37	<b>NET Disagree</b>
25	Mostly disagree
12	Completely disagree
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK ALL:**

Q.6a Thinking about how the federal government spends its money, which do you think should be the higher priority ...  
**[READ AND ROTATE]**

<u>Total</u>	
47	Programs that benefit older adults
27	Programs that benefit younger adults
17	Both are equally important <b>(VOL.)</b>
8	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**NO QUESTIONS 7-10; QUESTIONS 11 THROUGH 13 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

Q.14 How likely is it that, at some point in your life, you will be responsible for caring for an aging parent or another elderly family member? Do you think it is very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

<u>Total</u>	
47	Very likely
21	Somewhat likely
10	Not too likely
11	Not at all likely
*	Depends <b>(VOL.)</b>
11	Have already done this/Am currently doing this <b>(VOL.)</b>
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**QUESTIONS 15 THROUGH 16b HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

On another subject,

Q.17 Here are a few things family members sometimes do for each other. I'd like to know if you think each is a responsibility or is it not really a responsibility, regardless of whether it might be a good thing to do. (First/Next)...  
**[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] READ AS NECESSARY:** Do you think this is a responsibility or is it not really a responsibility?

- a. Parents providing financial assistance to an adult child if he or she needs it

<u>Total</u>	
52	Responsibility
44	Not really a responsibility
3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

- b. Adult children providing financial assistance to an elderly parent if he or she needs it

<u>Total</u>	
75	Responsibility
23	Not really a responsibility
2	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>



**ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about your own family...

F.1 Is your mother living?

<u>Total</u>	
64	Yes
36	No
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK ALL:**

F.2 Is your father living?

<u>Total</u>	
49	Yes
49	No
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK ALL:**

F.3 Do you have any living stepparents who play an important role in your life?

**IF YES (F.3=1), ASK:**

F.3a Would that be a stepmother, a stepfather or both?

<u>Total</u>	
14	Yes
4	Stepmother
5	Stepfather
4	Both stepmother and stepfather
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
86	No
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK F.4 AND F.5 ONLY IF BOTH PARENTS ARE LIVING (F.1=1 AND F.2=1): [n=842]**

F.4 Do your mother and father live together?

<u>Total</u>	
60	Yes
40	No
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

F.5 With which parent do you have the most contact?

<u>Total</u>	
51	Mother
15	Father
34	Neither/both same (VOL.)
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK F.6 IF MOTHER IS LIVING OR MOTHER NOT LIVING/DK AND IMPORTANT STEPMOTHER {F.1=1 or (F.1=2,9 & F.3a=1,3)}:**

F.6 How old is your (IF F.1=1: mother/IF F.1=2,9 & F.3a=1,3: stepmother)? **(READ IF NECESSARY: Just your best guess is fine.)**

**(RECORD EXACT AGE)**

**ASK F.7 IF FATHER IS LIVING OR FATHER NOT LIVING/DK AND IMPORTANT STEPFATHER {F.2=1 or (F.2=2,9 & F.3a=2,3)}:**

F.7 How old is your (IF F.2=1: father/ IF F.2=2,9 & F.3a=2,3: stepfather)? **(READ IF NECESSARY: Just your best guess is fine.)**

**(RECORD EXACT AGE)**

**COMBO F.6/F.7:**

**BASED ON THOSE WITH MOTHER OR STEPMOTHER LIVING [n=1,347]**

**BASED ON THOSE WITH FATHER OR STEPFATHER LIVING [n=1,005]**

<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>	
54	Younger than 65	55	Younger than 65
20	65-74	23	65-74
15	75-84	14	75-84
8	85 and older	5	85 and older
2	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>
64	Mean age of mother	63	Mean age of father

**QUESTIONS 18 THROUGH 20 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

----- ADULTS WITH AT LEAST ONE LIVING PARENT-----

Question 21 is asked of respondents with one or more living parents or stepparents (n=1,452). Respondents with no living parents or stepparents skip ahead to Question P.1. The following instructions indicate the referent in Q.21 given the respondent's situation.

<u>RESPONDENT'S SITUATION</u>	<u>ASK Q.21 ABOUT RESPONDENT'S...</u>
Both parents live together	Parents
Parents live separately and more contact with mother	Mother
Parents live separately and more contact with father	Father
Parents live separately and equal contact	FORM 1: Mother / FORM 2: Father
Only mother living	Mother

**ASK IF AT LEAST ONE LIVING PARENT (F.1=1 OR F.2=1 OR F.3=1): [n=1,452]**

Q.21 Have you GIVEN any financial support to your (parents/mother/father/stepmother/stepfather) in the past 12 months, or not?

**ASK IF YES (Q.21=1):**

Q.22 Was the financial support for help with ONGOING expenses, or not?

<u>Total</u>		<u>With parent / stepparent 65 or older</u>
33	Yes	32
24	Ongoing expenses	23
8	Not	9
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	*
67	No	67
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1

**Trends for comparison:**

	<u>Aug 2011<sup>4</sup></u>		<u>Feb 2009<sup>5</sup></u>
Yes	39	Yes	21
Ongoing expenses	31	Ongoing expenses	10
Not	8	Special circumstances	9
Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	Both	1
No	61	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1
Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	No	78
		Does not apply (VOL.)	*
		Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	*

**QUESTIONS 23 THROUGH 29 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE; NO QUESTION 30****ASK ALL:**

Q.31 Now thinking about some issues that have been in the news lately. In your opinion, what is more important ...[READ AND ROTATE]?

<u>Total</u>		<u>Trends for comparison<sup>6</sup></u>	
		<u>Aug 2012</u>	<u>Sep 2011</u>
32	Taking steps to reduce the budget deficit [OR]	33	35
56	Keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits as they are	51	58
8	Both equally (VOL.)	11	2
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	5	4

<sup>4</sup> In August 2011, the question was only asked of respondents with at least one parent ages 65 or older. The question did not include stepparents and respondents with two living parents were asked if they had given support to their "parents," regardless of whether they were living together or not.

<sup>5</sup> In February 2009, the question was only asked of respondents with a living parent or stepparent ages 65 or older. The question wording was slightly different. The first question read, "(Now I'd like to ask about/And how about) the kinds of things you may or may not have done for your (parents/mother/father/stepmother/stepfather) DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS. Did you ... [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? a. Given any financial help." The follow-up read, "Was the financial help given for special circumstances OR was it for ongoing expenses?"

<sup>6</sup> In all trends, items were not rotated. Also, the intro wording was, "What is more important..."

**ROTATE Q.32 AND Q.33****ASK ALL:**

Q.32 **[IF Q.32 ASKED FIRST, READ:** Thinking about Social Security and Medicare... / **IF Q.32 ASKED SECOND, READ:** Still thinking about these programs...] How likely do you think it is that, in the future, there will be enough money to provide these benefits at their current levels to older Americans? Do you think this is **[READ IN ORDER]**?

Total

45	<b>NET</b> Likely
14	Very likely
31	Somewhat likely
51	<b>NET</b> Not likely
32	Not too likely <b>[OR]</b>
19	Not at all likely
4	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Q.33 **[IF Q.33 ASKED FIRST, READ:** Thinking about Social Security and Medicare... / **IF Q.33 ASKED SECOND, READ:** Still thinking about these programs...] If Social Security and Medicare benefits are kept at their current levels, do you think this will put too much of a financial burden on younger generations, or don't you think so?

Total

44	Yes, will put too much of a burden on younger generations
45	No, will not
2	Depends <b>(VOL.)</b>
9	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY: [n=1,257]**

Q.34 To address financial concerns about the Social Security program would you favor or oppose **[INSERT FIRST ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? How about **[INSERT NEXT ITEM] [REPEAT AS NECESSARY: would you favor or oppose ...?]**

a. Gradually raising the age at which people can begin receiving Social Security benefits

<u>Total</u>		Sep <u>2011</u>
38	Favor	39
56	Oppose	59
5	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	2

b. Reducing Social Security benefits for seniors with higher incomes

<u>Total</u>		Sep <u>2011</u>
55	Favor	53
39	Oppose	42
6	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	5

## QUESTION 34 CONTINUED ...

- c. Raising payroll taxes on high-income earners

<u>Total</u>	
66	Favor
29	Oppose
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

## ASK FORM 2 ONLY: [n=1,254]

Q.35 To address financial concerns about the Medicare program would you favor or oppose [INSERT FIRST ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? How about [INSERT NEXT ITEM] [REPEAT AS NECESSARY: would you favor or oppose ...?]

- a. Gradually raising the age at which people can begin receiving Medicare benefits

<u>Total</u>		<u>Sep 2011</u>
35	Favor	38
59	Oppose	58
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4

- b. Reducing Medicare benefits for seniors with higher incomes

<u>Total</u>		<u>Sep 2011</u>
60	Favor	55
33	Oppose	40
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	5

## QUESTIONS M1 THROUGH PVOTE12B HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

## ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

<u>Total</u>	
24	Republican
33	Democrat
34	Independent
4	No preference (VOL.)
*	Other party (VOL.)
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

## Trends:

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>No preference (VOL.)</u>	<u>Other party (VOL.)</u>	<u>DK/Ref. (VOL.)</u>
Nov 28-Dec 5, 2012	24	33	34	4	*	4
Nov 8-11, 2012	31	35	32	*	*	1
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2
Oct 4-7 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2
Jul16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3

## The Big Generation Gap at the Polls is Echoed in Attitudes on Budget Tradeoffs

## PARTY TRENDS CONTINUED ...

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No preference <u>(VOL.)</u>	Other party <u>(VOL.)</u>	DK/Ref. <u>(VOL.)</u>
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4
Dec 7-11, 2011	23	33	38	3	*	2
Nov 9-14, 2011	24	33	38	3	1	2
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	23	33	38	2	1	3
Aug 17-21, 2011	24	30	40	3	*	3
Jul 20-24, 2011	24	32	38	4	*	2
<b>Yearly Totals</b>						
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6
2001 <i>Post-Sep 11</i>	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6
2001 <i>Pre-Sep 11</i>	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	n/a	3.6
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4
1989	33	33	34	n/a	n/a	n/a
1987	26	35	39	n/a	n/a	n/a

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

<u>Total</u>	
36	Republican/lean Republican
48	Democrat/lean Democrat
16	Refused to lean

**ASK ALL:**

IDEO In general, would you describe your political views as... **[READ]**

<u>Total</u>	
8	Very conservative
29	Conservative
35	Moderate
15	Liberal
7	Very liberal
6	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**[NOT SHOWN: HH1, HH2, OWNRENT]**