



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

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## Continued Pessimism about Fiscal Cliff Deal

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## Continued Pessimism about Fiscal Cliff Deal

With less than two weeks to go before the nation goes over the fiscal cliff, the public remains pessimistic about the possibility that the president and Congress will reach an agreement by the Jan. 1 deadline. In fact, opinions about the likelihood of a deal remain largely unchanged since early November, when negotiations between the two sides began.

The latest survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Dec. 13-16 among 1,006 adults, finds that 40% expect that the president and congressional Republicans will reach an agreement to prevent automatic spending cuts and tax increases from taking effect Jan. 1. Nearly half (49%) say they will not get a deal.

Opinions about the possibility of a deal have not changed at all since an [early December survey](#) by the Pew Research Center and The Washington Post. Moreover, they have not changed significantly since a [Nov. 8-11 Pew Research/Washington Post survey](#).

The survey finds that, as was the case in early December, Democrats are more optimistic than Republicans or independents about the possibility of a fiscal cliff agreement. About half of Democrats (51%) expect an agreement to be reached by the Jan. 1 deadline. Majorities of Republicans (59%) and independents (53%) disagree.

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### Less than Two Weeks to Go, Half Expect Nation Will Go Over Cliff

<i>Will president and Reps in Congress reach agreement before Jan 1 to avoid fiscal cliff?</i>	<b>Nov 8-11</b>	<b>Nov 29- Dec 2</b>	<b>Dec 13-16</b>
	%	%	%
Yes	38	40	40
No	51	49	49
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec.13-16, 2012, Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Earlier trends from Pew Research Center/Washington Post surveys.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 13-16, 2012, among a national sample of 1,006 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (601 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 405 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 191 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,006	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	282	7.0 percentage points
Democrats	334	6.4 percentage points
Independents	293	6.9 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**December 13-16, 2012, OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,006**

**PEW.1 AND PEW.A PREVIOUSLY RELEASED.**

**ASK ALL:**

On another topic...

PEW.2 Do you think President Obama and Republicans in Congress will reach an agreement to prevent automatic spending cuts and tax increases from going into effect before January 1<sup>st</sup>, or not?

Dec 13-16 <u>2012</u>		<i>Pew Research Center/Washington Post</i>	
		Nov 29-Dec 2 <u>2012</u>	Nov 8-11 <u>2012</u>
40	Yes, will	40	38
49	No, will not	49	51
11	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	11	11

**PEW.3 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**