



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

MONDAY, JULY 16, 2012

Just Over Half Know Where the Candidates Stand

---

## Raising Taxes on Rich Seen as Good for Economy, Fairness

---

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Andrew Kohut**

President, Pew Research Center

**Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock**

Associate Directors

**Scott Keeter**

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel (202) 419-4350

Fax (202) 419-4399

[www.peoplepress.org](http://www.peoplepress.org)

---

## Just Over Half Know Where the Candidates Stand

# Raising Taxes on Rich Seen as Good for Economy, Fairness

By two-to-one (44% to 22%), the public says that raising taxes on incomes above \$250,000 would help the economy rather than hurt it, while 24% say this would not make a difference. Moreover, an identical percentage (44%) says a tax increase on higher incomes would make the tax system more fair, while just 21% say it would make the system less fair.

Most Democrats say raising taxes on incomes over \$250,000 would help the economy (64%) and make the tax system more fair (65%). Republicans are more divided: 41% say this would hurt the economy, while 27% say it would help and 24% it would make no difference. And while 36% of Republicans say raising taxes on incomes over \$250,000 would make the tax system less fair, 30% say this would make no difference and 25% say it would make the tax system more fair.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted July 12-15 among 1,015 adults, finds that 58% identify Barack Obama as the presidential candidate who favors raising taxes to incomes above \$250,000. Republicans (66%) and Democrats (64%) are more likely than independents (53%) to correctly associate Obama with this proposal.

The proportion that correctly identifies Obama as the candidate who supports higher taxes on incomes over \$250,000 is on par with the percentage that knew the Supreme Court upheld most of the provisions of the 2010 Affordable Care Act. In late June, 55%

---

### More Say Tax Hikes on \$250K+ Would Help Economy, Fairness

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
<i>Would ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Help economy	44	27	64	41
Hurt economy	22	41	11	18
No difference	24	24	15	30
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Make tax system ...</i>				
More fair	44	25	65	44
Less fair	21	36	10	21
No difference	25	30	18	24
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 12-15, 2012.

---

### Which Candidate Supports Raising Taxes on Income Over \$250K?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Obama	58	66	64	53
Romney	7	7	8	7
Both	7	6	5	9
Neither	8	4	7	11
Don't know	<u>20</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 12-15, 2012.

---

said that the court had upheld most provisions of the law. (See [“Division, Uncertainty over Court’s Health Care Ruling.”](#) July 2, 2012.)

On balance, those who know Obama supports higher taxes on incomes over \$250,000, as well as those who do not, say it would have a positive impact on the economy and tax fairness. However, those unaware of Obama’s support of the proposal are more likely to say it would have no effect on the economy and tax fairness than are those who know Obama favors it.

There is a similar pattern in opinions among those who have heard a lot about the debate and those who have heard less about it. Overall, 35% say they have heard a lot about the debate over raising taxes on incomes over \$250,000, 39% have heard a little, while 26% have heard nothing at all.

### Those Aware that Obama Backs Tax Hike View Impact Positively

	<i>Candidate favors tax increase</i>		<i>Heard about tax debate</i>	
	<b>Obama</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Less</b>
<i>Would ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Help economy	47	39	48	41
Hurt economy	26	16	32	16
No difference	19	31	15	29
Don’t know	<u>8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Make tax system ...</i>				
More fair	50	36	52	40
Less fair	23	17	28	17
No difference	20	33	16	30
Don’t know	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 12-15, 2012.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted July 12-15, 2012 among a national sample of 1,015 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (608 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 407 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 202 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the 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>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,015	3.6 percentage points
Republicans	288	6.7 percentage points
Democrats	305	6.5 percentage points
Independents	318	6.4 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**  
**July 12-15, 2012, OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,015**

**PEW.1 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**NO QUESTION PEW.2**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.3 How much, if anything, have you heard about the debate over whether to raise federal taxes on income over \$250,000? Have you heard **[READ]**

July 12-15

2012

35	A lot
39	A little
26	Nothing at all
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF PEW.4 AND PEW.5**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.4 Do you think raising taxes on income over \$250,000 would **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 WITH 3 ALWAYS LAST]**

July 12-15

2012

44	Help the economy
22	Hurt the economy
24	Not make a difference
11	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**RANDOMIZE ORDER OF PEW.4 AND PEW.5**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.5 Do you think raising taxes on income over \$250,000 would **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 WITH 3 ALWAYS LAST]**

July 12-15

2012

44	Make the tax system more fair
21	Make the tax system less fair
25	Not make a difference
10	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.6 And just as far as you know, which presidential candidate supports raising taxes on income over \$250,000? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 FIRST, WITH OPTIONS 3 AND 4 FOLLOWING IN ORDER]**

July 12-15

2012

58	Obama
7	Romney
7	Both
8	Neither
20	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>