

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**February 21-24, 2013, OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,000**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE;] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Murder charges against Oscar Pistorius, an Olympic sprinter from South Africa February 21-24, 2013	12	25	29	32	1
b. Allegations that China's military has hacked into computer networks in the United States February 21-24, 2013	14	23	23	40	1
c. News about automatic cuts to federal spending that will take effect next week, unless the president and Congress act February 21-24, 2013	25	26	19	29	1

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

December 13-16, 2012: <i>The debate in Washington over automatic spending cuts and tax increases that would take effect in January unless the President and Congress act</i>	37	28	16	18	1
December 6-9, 2012	37	26	17	20	1
November 29-December 2, 2012	40	26	14	20	1
November 15-18, 2012	33	24	16	25	1
November 8-11, 2012	38	20	20	20	*
July 19-22, 2012	23	21	22	33	1
February 16-20, 2012: <i>Congress passing a bill to extend payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits<sup>1</sup></i>	24	27	21	27	1
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Congress and the president agreeing to cut federal spending and raise the debt limit</i>	46	25	13	14	1
December 16-19, 2010: <i>The extension of tax cuts and unemployment benefits approved by Congress and signed by President Obama<sup>2</sup></i>	37	27	15	19	1
December 9-12, 2010: <i>The agreement reached between Barack Obama and Congressional Republicans to extend tax cuts and unemployment benefits</i>	37	29	15	17	1
December 2-5, 2010: <i>The debate in Washington over the federal income tax cuts passed when George W. Bush was president</i>	39	26	17	17	1

<sup>1</sup> The wording of item PEW.1d was changed after the first night of interviewing (February 16, 2012) to reflect Congress passing this legislation. On February 16, 2012, the item wording was "Negotiations in Congress to extend payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits."

<sup>2</sup> The wording of item PEW.1c was changed after the first night of interviewing (December 16, 2010), to reflect Congress passing and Obama signing this legislation. On December 16, 2010 the item read "The debate in Washington over extending tax cuts and unemployment benefits."

**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
September 16-19, 2010: <i>The debate in Washington over competing Democratic and Republican tax plans</i>	21	24	21	34	*
September 9-12, 2010	16	19	22	42	1
May 8-11, 2009: <i>The debate in Washington over the federal budget</i>	22	28	19	31	*
March 27-30, 2009: <i>Debate over Barack Obama's budget proposal</i>	28	34	18	19	1
February 27-March 2, 2009: <i>Barack Obama's budget proposal for next year that raises taxes on wealthy Americans and increases spending on health care, education and other programs</i>	47	34	9	10	*
May, 2003: <i>George W. Bush's tax cut and economic stimulus plan</i>	25	36	22	15	2
February, 2003	26	33	23	16	2
January, 2003	28	34	21	15	2
February, 2002: <i>Debate in Congress over G.W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan</i>	17	31	28	23	1
April, 2001	24	38	20	18	*
February, 2001: <i>G.W. Bush's tax cut plan</i>	31	35	19	14	1
September, 1999: <i>The debate in Washington over how much to cut taxes</i>	18	30	28	23	1
July, 1999	14	34	21	31	*
June, 1997: <i>Competing proposals on ways to cut taxes as part of the recent bipartisan budget agreement</i>	11	27	28	33	1
September, 1992 (RVs): <i>George Bush's plan to improve the economy by cutting government spending and cutting taxes</i>	28	44	18	9	1

**NO QUESTIONS PEW.2-PEW.3****ASK ALL:**PEWWP.4<sup>3</sup>

How well do you feel you understand what would happen if automatic federal spending cuts take place next week? **[READ]**

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

*... automatic spending cuts and tax increases were to go into effect in January*

		Nov 29-Dec 2	Nov 8-11
Feb 21-24			
<u>2013</u>		<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u>
18	Very well	28	26
35	Fairly well	29	32
25	Not too well	22	23
21	Not at all well	19	17
1	Don't know <b>(VOL.)</b>	1	1
*	Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	*	1

<sup>3</sup> Questions PEWWP.4-PEWWP.7 asked in conjunction with *The Washington Post*.

**ASK ALL:**

PEWWP.5

If automatic federal spending cuts take place, do you think they would have a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect on **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS a AND b IN BLOC FIRST, FOLLOWED BY ITEMS c AND d]**? How about on **[INSERT NEXT ITEM] [IF NECESSARY, AND ALWAYS FOLLOWING PEWWP.6: would automatic federal spending cuts have a major effect, a minor effect, or no effect on ... ITEM]**

		Major effect	Minor effect	No effect	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a.	The U.S. economy				
	February 21-24, 2013	60	25	5	11
	<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
	Nov 29-Dec 2, 2012 <sup>4</sup>	64	20	7	9
	Nov 8-11, 2012	68	21	2	10
b.	Your own personal financial situation				
	February 21-24, 2013	30	40	19	11
	<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
	Nov 29-Dec 2, 2012 <sup>4</sup>	43	35	14	7
	Nov 8-11, 2012	44	38	9	9
c.	The federal budget deficit				
	February 21-24, 2013	45	31	12	12
d.	The U.S. Military				
	February 21-24, 2013	55	25	10	11

**ASK IF EFFECT ON ECONOMY (PEWWP.5a=1,2), DIRECTLY FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO PEWWP.5a [N=854]:**

PEWWP.6

And would the effect on the U.S. economy be mostly positive or mostly negative?

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

Asked after reference to: "if these automatic spending cuts and tax increases go into effect"

Feb 21-24 2013		Nov 29-Dec2 2012	Nov 8-11 2012
21	Mostly positive	23	23
73	Mostly negative	71	70
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	6	7

<sup>4</sup> Nov 29-Dec 2, 2012 and Nov 8-11, 2012 surveys asked about the effect of "... automatic spending cuts and tax increases ..."

**ASK ALL:**

PEWWP.7

If an agreement to prevent automatic federal spending cuts is not reached before next week's deadline, who do you think would be more to blame **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

Feb 21-24 <u>2013</u>		Feb 13-18 <u>2013</u> <sup>5</sup>
45	Republicans in Congress	49
32	President Obama	31
13	Both equally <b>(VOL.)</b>	11
1	Neither <b>(VOL.)</b>	1
10	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	7

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

*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?*

*If an agreement is not reached, who do you think would be more to blame: **[READ AND RANDOMIZE: Republicans in Congress or President Obama]**?*

	Nov 8-11 <u>2012</u>
Republicans in Congress	53
President Obama	29
Both equally <b>(VOL.)</b>	10
Neither <b>(VOL.)</b>	2
Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	7

*If the federal government shuts down because **[RANDOMIZE: Republicans and the Obama administration]** can't agree on a budget, who do you think would be more to blame: **[READ IN SAME ORDER AS ABOVE: Republicans or the Obama administration]**?*

	Mar 30-Apr 3 <u>2011</u>	Feb 24-27 <u>2011</u>
Republicans	39	36
The Obama administration	36	35
Both equally <b>(VOL.)</b>	16	17
Neither <b>(VOL.)</b>	2	1
Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	7	10

<sup>5</sup> In February 13-18, 2013 survey, question was worded: "If a deficit reduction agreement is not reached before the deadline, who do you think would be more to blame?"