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AARP Bulletin Survey on Congressional Expectations for 2013

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AARP Bulletin Survey on Congressional Expectations for 2013

The AARP Bulletin commissioned a nationwide survey in November 2012 to examine the post-election expectations for Congress and the president in the new year. The survey was conducted for AARP by Woelfel Research. Interviews were conducted between November 17-27, 2012, among a nationally representative sample of 1,001 adults age 18 and older. The margin of error for total respondents is +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error among subgroups is higher. Data are weighted to provide nationally representative estimates of the population 18 years of age and older.

The purpose of this survey was to determine which issues were of greatest importance to Americans. This survey also gauged Americans' perceptions of the likelihood that these issues would be addressed in the next Congress.

Key findings

- More overall respondents, as well as respondents in each of the two age groups, say it is very important for the president and Congress to work on helping more Americans find jobs.
- The second- and third-ranked issues for the overall sample—improving education and fighting terrorism— have 77% of sample respondents regarding it as very important for the president and Congress to work on in 2013.

Table 1 shows the top ten issues respondents ranked as “very important.”

Table 1. Top 10 issue areas deemed “very important” for the president and Congress to work on the following issues during the next year.

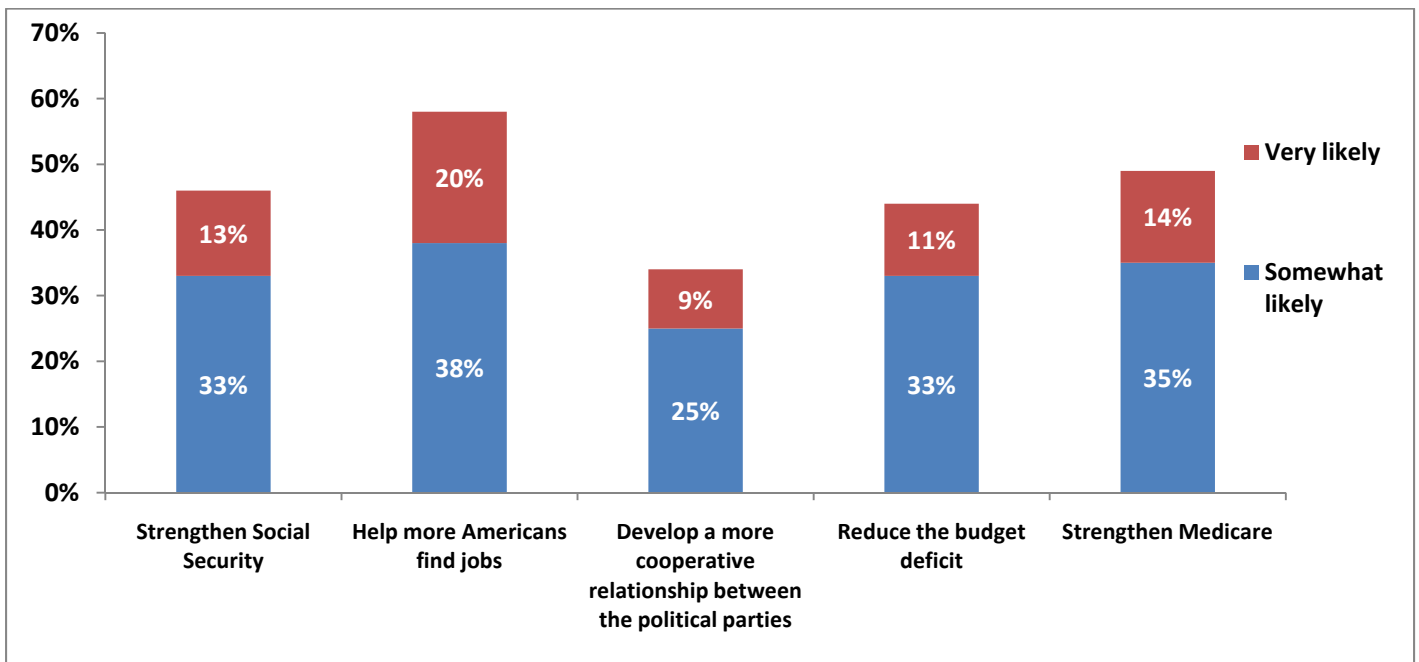
Rank	Issue Area	Total	18-49	50+
1.	Help more Americans find jobs	86%	87%	85%
2.	Improve education in America	77%	79%	76%
3.	Fight terrorism	77%	78%	77%
4.	Reduce the budget deficit	76%	73%	80%
5.	Strengthen Social Security	70%	66%	75%
6.	Address energy policy to reduce gas and energy prices	68%	68%	67%
7.	Develop a more cooperative relationship between the political parties	67%	59%	78%
8.	Strengthen Medicare	67%	63%	72%
9.	Keep taxes as low as possible	64%	65%	64%
10.	Reform the tax code by closing loopholes	61%	55%	69%

For select issues, a follow-up question asked respondents how likely they felt it was that Congress would, in fact, address the issue in question. Key findings include:

- For only a single issue—helping more Americans to find jobs—does a clear majority of respondents feel it is at least somewhat likely that some legislative work will be done.
- Almost half of respondents say it is at least somewhat likely that work will be done to strengthen Medicare in 2013.
- Only about one-third of respondents expect that Congress will act to develop a more cooperative relationship between the political parties.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of total respondents reporting that it is “very likely” or “somewhat likely” that Congress will take action on specific issue.

Figure 1: Percentage of total respondents saying it is “very likely” or “somewhat likely” that Congress will take action on select issues in 2013.



2012-2013 Congressional Expectations Survey
18+ randomly selected US, Total N=1001 sampling error = ±3.1%

Hello, this is _____ calling from Woelfel Research, Inc., a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on some important issues. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All your responses will be kept entirely confidential.

1. How important is it to you that the president and Congress work on the following issues during the next year? For each: Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important at all, Don't Know [ROTATE THE ISSUES]

1a. Help more Americans find jobs

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important		86	87	85
2. Somewhat important		9	9	10
3. Not very important		1	1	2
4. Not at all important		2	2	2
5. VOL: Don't know		<0.5	-	1
6. VOL: Refused		<0.5	1	<0.5

1b. Address energy policy to reduce gas and energy prices

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important		68	68	67
2. Somewhat important		22	21	24
3. Not very important		5	6	4
4. Not at all important		4	4	3
5. VOL: Don't know		2	2	2
6. VOL: Refused		<0.5	-	1

1c. Develop a more cooperative relationship between the political parties

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important		67	59	78
2. Somewhat important		22	28	14
3. Not very important		5	5	4
4. Not at all important		5	6	3
5. VOL: Don't know		1	1	1
6. VOL: Refused		<0.5	-	<0.5

1d. Reduce the budget deficit

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	76	73	80
2.	Somewhat important	18	21	14
3.	Not very important	2	3	2
4.	Not at all important	2	2	2
5.	VOL: Don't know	1	1	1
6.	VOL: Refused	<0.5	-	<0.5

1e. Keep taxes as low as possible

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	64	65	64
2.	Somewhat important	22	21	23
3.	Not very important	8	9	7
4.	Not at all important	4	4	5
5.	VOL: Don't know	1	1	1
6.	VOL: Refused	1	1	<0.5

1f. Reduce our military involvement in the Middle East

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	49	49	49
2.	Somewhat important	29	30	27
3.	Not very important	10	10	10
4.	Not at all important	9	8	9
5.	VOL: Don't know	3	2	4
6.	VOL: Refused	<0.5	-	1

1g. Increase regulation of Wall Street and the financial industry

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	45	43	48
2.	Somewhat important	26	28	25
3.	Not very important	15	17	12
4.	Not at all important	9	10	9
5.	VOL: Don't know	4	2	6
6.	VOL: Refused	1	1	1

1h. Strengthen Social Security

Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
	N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important	70	66	75
2. Somewhat important	23	26	18
3. Not very important	4	6	2
4. Not at all important	2	2	2
5. VOL: Don't know	1	<0.5	2
6. VOL: Refused	<0.5	-	1

1i. Improve the nation's roads and bridges

Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
	N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important	47	44	51
2. Somewhat important	40	40	39
3. Not very important	11	13	8
4. Not at all important	2	3	2
5. VOL: Don't know	<0.5	-	<0.5
6. VOL: Refused	<0.5	-	1

1j. Strengthen Medicare

Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
	N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important	67	63	72
2. Somewhat important	24	26	21
3. Not very important	5	7	3
4. Not at all important	3	3	2
5. VOL: Don't know	1	-	1
6. VOL: Refused	1	1	<0.5

1k. Reform immigration

Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
	N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very important	48	43	54
2. Somewhat important	34	35	32
3. Not very important	8	10	7
4. Not at all important	7	8	4
5. VOL: Don't know	3	3	4
6. VOL: Refused	1	1	<0.5

1l. Improve education in America

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	77	79	76
2.	Somewhat important	17	16	17
3.	Not very important	4	4	3
4.	Not at all important	2	2	3
5.	VOL: Don't know	<0.5	-	1
6.	VOL: Refused	-	-	<0.5

1m. Fight terrorism

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	77	78	77
2.	Somewhat important	16	16	17
3.	Not very important	3	3	4
4.	Not at all important	2	3	1
5.	VOL: Don't know	1	<0.5	1
6.	VOL: Refused	1	1	<0.5

1n. Reduce the deficit even if it means raising taxes

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	47	45	48
2.	Somewhat important	29	31	27
3.	Not very important	12	12	11
4.	Not at all important	8	8	7
5.	VOL: Don't know	4	3	5
6.	VOL: Refused	1	1	1

1o. Strengthen Social Security even if it means raising taxes

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	44	41	49
2.	Somewhat important	33	35	30
3.	Not very important	12	14	10
4.	Not at all important	6	7	5
5.	VOL: Don't know	3	2	5
6.	VOL: Refused	1	1	1

1p. Reform the tax code by closing loopholes

	Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	61	55	69
2.	Somewhat important	27	32	21
3.	Not very important	5	7	3
4.	Not at all important	2	3	1
5.	VOL: Don't know	4	3	4
6.	VOL: Refused	1	2	<0.5

1q. Reform the tax code by reducing the mortgage interest deduction

	Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very important	33	34	31
2.	Somewhat important	31	33	29
3.	Not very important	16	16	14
4.	Not at all important	13	11	15
5.	VOL: Don't know	7	4	10
6.	VOL: Refused	1	1	1

2. How likely do you think that in the next year Congress will take action to:
For Each: Very likely, Somewhat likely, Not very likely, Not likely at all
 [ROTATE THE ACTIONS]

2a. Strengthen Social Security

	Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very likely	13	12	13
2.	Somewhat likely	33	33	34
3.	Not very likely	38	41	35
4.	Not at all likely	14	13	16
5.	VOL: Don't know	2	2	2
6.	VOL: Refused	<0.5	-	<0.5

2b. Help more Americans find jobs

	Base: Total Respondents	Total %	18 – 49 %	50 + %
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1.	Very likely	20	19	21
2.	Somewhat likely	38	40	35
3.	Not very likely	28	27	29
4.	Not at all likely	13	13	13
5.	VOL: Don't know	1	<0.5	2
6.	VOL: Refused	<0.5	-	<0.5

2c. Develop a more cooperative relationship between the political parties

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very likely		9	7	12
2. Somewhat likely		25	22	28
3. Not very likely		39	42	34
4. Not at all likely		26	27	24
5. VOL: Don't know		2	2	1
6. VOL: Refused		<0.5	-	<0.5

2d. Reduce the budget deficit

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very likely		11	8	15
2. Somewhat likely		33	32	33
3. Not very likely		36	37	34
4. Not at all likely		19	21	17
5. VOL: Don't know		2	2	2
6. VOL: Refused		-	-	-

2e. Strengthen Medicare

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Very likely		14	13	15
2. Somewhat likely		35	37	33
3. Not very likely		34	34	35
4. Not at all likely		15	15	14
5. VOL: Don't know		2	1	3
6. VOL: Refused		-	-	-

3. Which is more important — Cutting taxes or reducing the budget deficit? [ROTATE ORDER OF THE PAIR]

	Base: Total Respondents	Total	18 – 49	50 +
		%	%	%
		N=1001	N=572	N=429
1. Cutting taxes		29	33	23
2. Reducing the budget deficit		64	63	66
3. Other		5	3	8
4. VOL: Refused		2	1	2