

**ABC NEWS.COM POLL: SURPLUS PRIORITIES - 8/27/00**  
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## **Social Security Surpasses Tax Cut In Public's Spending Priorities**

Even as George W. Bush pursues his call for a broad federal tax cut, three-quarters of Americans express other priorities for the budget surplus.

Twenty-five percent give top priority to cutting income taxes, up seven points since July. But many more - 42 percent - prefer to use the surplus to strengthen Social Security; 16 percent favor debt reduction and 14 percent give priority to "other domestic programs."

When those "other programs" are specified as education and health care, moreover, support for that spending rises sharply, and support for a tax cut shrinks to 16 percent.

As usual, cutting taxes is most popular among Republicans; 38 percent say it should be the top priority for the surplus. But that's far from a majority, and indeed nearly as many Republicans, 35 percent, call Social Security more important. Among independents, 23 percent give priority to cutting taxes. Among Democrats it's 18 percent.

Priority for the surplus:				
Cut taxes	Reduce debt	Social Security	"Domestic programs"	
25%	16	42	14	
Cut taxes	Reduce debt	Social Security	"Education/health care"	
16%	13	29	40	

There are differences among other groups, as well. The less money people earn, the higher priority they give to spending on Social Security; that's logical, since they're more likely to rely on it when they retire. Similarly, older people give higher priority to Social Security, younger people less so. And half of women give top priority to strengthening Social Security, compared to 34 percent of men.

The poll also shows the potency of education and health care as political issues – along with Social Security, they've reliably been on top of the list of voter priorities in the 2000 election. When people are asked about spending "on other domestic programs," just 14 percent give it top priority. But when they're asked about spending "on other domestic programs, *such as education or health care*," that shoots up to 40 percent – making this the top priority for spending the federal surplus, surpassing even Social Security.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone August 23-27, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,004 adults. The results have a 3-point error margin. Field work by ICR- International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

70. (Half sample) Which of these do you think should be the top priority for any surplus money in the federal budget - cut federal income taxes, put it toward reducing the national debt, strengthen the Social Security system, or increase spending on other domestic programs?

	Cut taxes	Reduce debt	Soc. Sec.	Dom. Progs.	No opin.
8/27/00	25	16	42	14	3
7/23/00	18	22	40	18	2
9/2/99	20	24	43	13	1
7/25/98	22	19	47	10	2
3/14/99	20	21	47	10	2
1/31/98	17	23	47	10	2
1/19/98	16	29	39	14	1

71. (Half sample) Which of these do you think should be the top priority for any surplus money in the federal budget - cut federal income taxes, put it toward reducing the national debt, strengthen the Social Security system, or increase spending on other domestic programs *such as education or health care?*

	Cut taxes	Reduce debt	Soc. Sec.	Dom. Progs.	No opin.
8/27/00	16	13	29	40	2
7/23/00	15	19	32	33	2
9/2/99	14	19	29	37	1