

Tax Cut Déjà Vu: Unequal Benefit Seen

It's tax-cut déjà vu: A sizable plurality of Americans think the Republican tax package will disproportionately benefit the rich – almost exactly the same as it was at the time of the last big tax cut, under Ronald Reagan eighteen years ago.

Nearly half the public (49 percent) thinks wealthy people will benefit most from the proposed \$792 billion in cuts, as opposed to the poor, the middle class or "all Americans equally." Forty-eight percent said the same thing in a 1981 poll on Reagan's tax cut.

Who'll benefit most from the tax cut plan?	8/1/99	4/22/81
Poor people	6%	5
Middle income	14	14
Upper income	49	48
All people equally	23	27

The suspicion that the rich benefit unequally is one reason tax cuts do not enjoy broad public demand. In an ABC News poll last week, cutting taxes took a distant second in public priorities to funding Social Security.

PARTISAN – There's a strong partisan tint to these views. Democrats are twice as likely as Republicans to believe the wealthy would benefit most from the Republican tax plan. Independents fall in between, with half feeling this way.

Tax-cut beneficiaries:	-----Party ID-----			
	All	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Poor people	6%	7	6	6
Middle income	14	22	8	13
Upper income	49	32	64	50
All people equally	23	31	17	26

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone July 28-August 1, 1999, among a random national sample of 1,012 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

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

5. As you may know, the Republicans in Congress have called for a 792 billion dollar tax cut over the next 10 years. Who do you think would benefit most from such a tax cut: poor and lower income people, middle income people, upper income people, or do you think all people would benefit pretty much equally?

	Poor	Middle	Upper	All equally	No opin.
8/1/99	6	14	49	23	7
4/22/81*	5	14	48	27	6
3/29/81*	6	17	47	26	5
2/20/81*	7	15	43	31	4

*Reagan called for a 30 percent federal income tax reduction for all taxpayers over the next three years. Who do you think would benefit most from such a tax cut: poor and lower income people, middle income people, upper income people, or do you think all people would benefit pretty much equally?