



New Survey Finds That Social Security and Unemployment are Americans' Primary Economic Concerns

More than 70% of the population reports that reducing poverty is personally important to them.

Chicago, IL, February 20, 2016—A new national poll conducted by [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) provides a detailed look at the economic issues Americans identify as most important. The results ranked protecting Social Security and reducing unemployment at the top of the list, along with poverty and the federal budget deficit.

"Although differences in economic status and partisan beliefs make for many differing opinions, Americans overall agree that certain areas, such as Social Security, wages, and reducing the federal deficit should be top priorities," said [Trevor Tompson](#), director of The AP-NORC Center. "Our poll provides policymakers with detailed insights about these priorities, giving them the information they need to make informed policy decisions."

Key findings from the survey include:

- More than 80 percent of Americans say it is extremely or very important to protect the future of Social Security and reduce unemployment.
- Slightly more than half of the American public (53 percent) describe the economy as in poor shape, while 46 percent believe it is in good condition.
- Twenty-seven percent of the public say their finances deteriorated over the past year, but 38 percent of those expect things to improve in the next year. Twenty-eight percent of those same respondents are not so optimistic, expecting a further decline in their personal finances.
- Income inequality is an important concern for nearly 60 percent of the population, and nearly 56 percent of Americans believe that reducing the income gap between rich and poor is the responsibility of the government, while 42 percent say it is not.
- Half of the public say that increasing the minimum wage is important to them personally, and 71 percent of the public is in favor of it.

About the Survey

The nationwide poll was conducted Jan. 14-17, 2016, using the [AmeriSpeak](#) Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cellphones were conducted with 1,008 adults.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

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NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge.

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

About AmeriSpeak Omnibus

AmeriSpeak Omnibus is a once-a-month, multi-client survey using a probability sample of at least 1,000 nationally representative adults age 18 and older. Respondents are interviewed online and by phone from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel—the most scientifically rigorous multi-client household panel in the United States. AmeriSpeak households are selected randomly from NORC's National Sample Frame, the industry leader in sample coverage. The National Frame is representative of over 99 percent of U.S. households and includes additional coverage of hard-to-survey population segments, such as rural and low-income households, that are underrepresented in other sample frames. More information about AmeriSpeak is available at AmeriSpeak.org.

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