

A Nation in Debt

How Can We Pay the Bills?



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Community Forum Worksheet

NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD a chance to participate in a forum on this issue, we'd like to know what you're thinking. Anonymous responses will be included in summary reports on the forums and in research to help us better understand how people are thinking about current issues.

Here is a reminder of the actions you discussed in your forums:

- a. Job training is important, but there is little to no correlation between increasing job training and an improved economy. Without a clear connection, is it worth going even deeper into debt for it?
- b. With the national government in gridlock, pay-as-you-go requirements could mean even more political games and brinkmanship. Do we really think leaders will compromise and make the hard decisions?
- c. If we ask Americans to accept fewer government services and higher taxes to tackle the debt, should the sacrifices fall on everyone to at least some degree, or are there groups who should be exempt?
- d. Earmarks are a tiny part of the budget. If we expect to make progress, shouldn't we look at the big-ticket items—Social Security, Medicare, and the military? In earlier years, earmarks often helped Congress reach a compromise. Will eliminating them help reduce the national debt?
- e. Will these measures discussed here spur rapid growth? If they don't work, won't the debt grow even higher and become an even greater burden on future generations?
- f. People often want to cut services they don't value but reject cutting those they do. What government service that you truly value would you be willing to reduce?
- g. The nation's bridges and roads need rebuilding, but is this the best way to get the economy moving? And is it worth going even deeper in debt for it?
- h. What will happen to more vulnerable people in our society if we cut government services in health care, education, and the environment? Are we willing to accept the results of these cuts?
- i. Requiring balanced budgets could limit the country's ability to fight recessions by injecting money into the economy when it's showing signs of weakness. Is a balanced-budget amendment worth it even if it increases the risk of recessions?

1. Which **THREE** actions above (a-i) do you most strongly **SUPPORT**? _____
2. Which **THREE** actions above (a-i) do you most strongly **OPPOSE**? _____
3. Are there any actions above you still feel **UNSURE** about? _____

4. What else could be done at the community, state, or national level to address this problem?

5. Did you talk about aspects of the issue you hadn't considered before?
 Yes No
 If so, please explain. _____

6. Were there ideas or proposals that you tended to favor coming into the forum that you now have second thoughts about?
 Yes No
 If so, please explain. _____

7. Not including this forum, how many National Issues Forums have you attended?
 0 1-3 4-6 7 or more Not sure
8. Are you male or female? Male Female Other (please specify) _____
9. How old are you?
 17 or younger 18-30 31-45 46-64 65 or older
10. Are you: African American Asian American Hispanic or Latinx Native American
 White/Caucasian Other (please specify) _____
11. In what type of community do you live? City/Urban Suburban Rural
12. What is your zip code? _____ What state do you live in? _____
13. What issue would you like to see covered in a future forum? _____

After you have filled this worksheet out, please give it to your moderator, email it to forumreports@nifi.org, or mail it to National Issues Forums Institute, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, OH 45459. This worksheet is also available online at www.nifi.org/questionnaires.