

New Yorkers divided on how to balance state budget

July 6 2010, By George Lowery

(PhysOrg.com) -- Cornell's Survey Research Institute asked New Yorkers: If the state does not have enough money to balance its budget and pay for existing programs, would you raise taxes, cut state programs or borrow money?

For its Empire State Poll 2010, Cornell's [Survey](#) Research Institute asked New Yorkers: If the state does not have enough money to balance its budget and pay for existing programs, would you raise taxes, cut state programs or borrow money?

Almost half (46 percent) of all respondents indicated they would prefer to cut state programs, followed by borrowing money (30 percent) and raising taxes (24 percent) to balance the budget and pay for existing state programs. Almost two out of three upstate residents (63 percent) identified cutting state programs as the solution, with only one out of five indicating that the state should raise taxes (19 percent) or borrow money (18 percent).

"Typically, we might think support for taxation varies across income groups. [Sales taxes](#) disproportionately affect low-income households; high income tax affects people more with high incomes," said Peter Enns, assistant professor of government and an expert on public opinion. "But across income groups, almost a quarter of each supports tax hikes in this poll. There's a segment of the public that understands that government services -- education, police, [unemployment insurance](#) -- are important, even though, classically, tax increases are a recourse of last resort."

Respondents who answered that state programs should be cut were then asked to specify which programs. About 38 percent of respondents were unable to provide a specific program to cut. Of those who did provide a specific response, 39 percent said cut welfare/social service programs (including cutting Medicaid and unemployment benefits). Other suggestions included reducing the size of government (15 percent), reducing government salaries and pensions (15 percent) and reducing aid to local and state schools (12 percent).

Other findings: More men than women support cutting state programs; women are more likely to support borrowing money than men; the majority (57 percent) of whites favor cutting state programs, but the plurality (45 percent) of non-whites support borrowing money. Younger people (under age 35) favor borrowing money, but people over 35 support cutting state programs.

Households with incomes less than \$50,000 tend to support borrowing, while higher [income](#) households (\$50,000 and up) favor cutting state programs. Liberals split evenly on how to balance the state budget; moderates and most conservatives want programs cut.

The Empire State Poll has gathered opinions of New York state residents for the past eight years. "There is no other New York statewide poll of its kind measuring residents' opinions regarding the most important issues facing them," said Yasamin Miller, director of the Survey Research Institute. Eight hundred interviews were conducted between Feb. 1 and March 29, 2010, equally divided between upstate and downstate New Yorkers at least 18 years old. Results were weighted to reflect population distribution within the state.

Read more about the poll and methodology at sri.cornell.edu/sri/esp.reports.cfm

Provided by Cornell University

Citation: New Yorkers divided on how to balance state budget (2010, July 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-07-yorkers-state.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.