

New poll suggests leaders need to listen more closely to Americans

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With Congress at a budget impasse, a new poll suggests the nation's leaders should look more deeply at the public's priorities, particularly regarding proposed cuts to medical, health and scientific research. Research!America urges our nation's leaders to put the public's interest and the nation's future ahead of politics and to move past polarizing budget battles and the uncertainty of continuing resolutions that resolve nothing. Americans are hungry for solutions from Washington.

The poll, commissioned by Research!America, surveyed a mix of self-described conservatives (32%), [liberals](#) (32%) and moderates (36%). Among the findings:

- As we emerge from the [recession](#), 78% of Americans think federal funding for health research is important for [job creation](#) and the [economy](#);
- 61% say accelerating our nation's investment in research to improve health is a priority;
- 76% think [global health](#) R&D is important to the U.S. economy; and
- 84% think it is important that the government plays a role in research for prevention and wellness.

The poll shows that Americans support the entire research enterprise, from federally funded research to research funded by the private sector, but that few—just 11%—say they are very well informed about their elected officials' positions on medical, health and scientific research.

To address this gap, Research!America and more than a dozen partner organizations have joined forces for the 2011 launch of Your Congress—Your Health, a non-partisan constituent education initiative that asks members of the 112th Congress to share their positions on research and related issues.

Former Congressman John E. Porter (R-IL), Research!America's chair, said: "Today we face the most daunting challenge to research funding in perhaps 65 years. Now is a crucial time to ask elected officials their views on medical and health research. Research, and the work building on it, creates high-tech, high-paying jobs, grows our economy, and pays for the investment thousands of times over in health care cost savings. We must insist on these investments to maintain our leadership. Our health, our economy and our well-being depend on it."

The poll shows that 90% of Americans think the U.S. is in danger of losing its global competitive edge in science, technology and education—a 5% increase since May 2010—and an astounding 98% think education and training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics is important to U.S. competitiveness and future economic prosperity. Global rankings show the U.S. slipping behind other nations in math and science education.

The poll confirms that Americans also value privately funded research, which often builds on discoveries made in federally funded labs to bring new drugs and devices to market. A majority (55%) of Americans support tax and regulatory incentives for industries investing in and conducting health research and development; 70% think it is important

to make the federal R&D tax credit for businesses permanent, and 84% think it is important to invest in regulatory science, to make the drug and device development process more efficient for businesses and safer for patients.

Mary Woolley, Research!America's president and CEO, said: "The discovery and development of new, life-saving treatments depends on a healthy research enterprise, funded by both the federal government and the private sector. Cutting research funding will postpone hope for a longer, better life for the millions of Americans diagnosed with deadly and debilitating conditions each year."

Additional findings from the poll include:

- 91% think R&D is important to their state's economy;
- 83% agree that basic scientific research should be funded by the federal government;
- 66% think research to improve health is part of the solution to rising health care costs; and
- 72% favor expanding federal funding for research using embryonic stem cells.

Woolley added: "Research!America has kept our fingers on the pulse of public attitudes toward the future of health for nearly 20 years. We know the American public sees research as a solution—to health care costs, job creation, increased productivity, global leadership, and to finding and quickly delivering life-saving cures, preventions and treatments."

Your Congress—Your Health asks Members of [Congress](#) to share their

positions on topics related to research and health. The site posts their responses and offers easy-to-use tools for the public to contact their senators and representative to thank them for submitting their views or ask them to do so.

More information: To see more poll results, visit [www.yourcongressyourhealth.org ... e_america.php?qq=501](http://www.yourcongressyourhealth.org...e_america.php?qq=501)

Provided by Research!America

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