

# More than half of Americans doubt US global leadership in 2020

March 14 2012

---

More than half of likely voters doubt that the United States will be the No. 1 world leader in science, technology and health care by the year 2020, according to a new national public opinion poll commissioned by Research!America. The findings reveal deep concerns among Americans about the country's ability to maintain its world-class status in innovation, research and development before the next decade.

"A lackluster investment in science and innovation is driving fears among Americans about our world dominance in the years ahead," said Research!America Chair and former Illinois Congressman John E. Porter. "These concerns will likely increase unless policy makers take action to avoid serious consequences, such as a major loss of U.S. jobs, business, [medical breakthroughs](#) and output in innovation."

Only 23% of Americans consider the U.S. first in medical and [health research](#) today. And an overwhelming majority (91%) say it is important for the U.S. to maintain its world [leadership role](#), as other nations such as China and India ramp up their investment.

Americans are especially concerned about funding cuts to medical and [health](#) research. Upon hearing that federal spending for medical and health research (after adjusting for inflation) has declined over the past five years, more than half of likely voters (57%) had a negative reaction to the cut in spending. Moreover, 54% think that [federal spending](#) for medical and health research should be exempt from across-the-board cuts outlined in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

"With the threat of automatic cuts on the horizon, a significant amount of federally supported research and innovation will be shelved, impacting the pace of [scientific discovery](#) in the U.S. and forcing patients to stand aside as other priorities dominate," said Mary Woolley, president and CEO of Research!America. "We simply cannot afford to jeopardize our leadership and settle for second best. Elected officials and candidates must make stronger commitments to sustaining our world-class status in research and innovation."

More than half of likely voters (64%) say they would be more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who supports increased government funding for medical and health research. A vast majority of likely voters also think it is important for presidential and congressional candidates to debate issues relating to science, innovation and health.

Poll highlights include:

- 58% of Americans do not believe the United States will be a world leader in science and technology in 2020;
- 53% of Americans do not believe the United States will be a world leader in health care in 2020;
- 65% of Americans say it's important that the U.S. is a leader in medical and health research.
- 85% of likely voters are concerned about the impact of a decreased federal investment in research, including the possibility of scientists leaving their profession or moving abroad to countries with a stronger investment in research;
- 66% of likely [voters](#) believe government investment in medical and health research will have an impact on the future of the United States; and
- Nearly 70% of Americans believe science and math education will have an impact on the future of the [United States](#).

**More information:** To view the poll, visit:  
[www.researchamerica.org/upload ... ionalpollwithJZA.pdf](http://www.researchamerica.org/upload ... ionalpollwithJZA.pdf)

Provided by Research!America

Citation: More than half of Americans doubt US global leadership in 2020 (2012, March 14)  
retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-03-americans-global-leadership.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.