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Most Say Disaster Spending Does Not Require Offsetting Cuts

A Pew Research Center/Washington Post Survey

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Most Say Disaster Spending Does Not Require Offsetting Cuts

As Oklahoma recovers from severe damage caused by last week's tornado, a majority of Americans (59%) say federal spending in response to natural disasters is emergency aid that does not need to be offset by cuts to other programs, while 29% say such spending must be offset by cuts to other programs.

While there are partisan differences in opinions about how disaster aid should be treated, majorities of Democrats (69%), independents (57%) and Republicans (52%) say that federal spending in response to natural disasters does not require offsetting spending cuts elsewhere.

The national survey by the Pew Research Center and the Washington Post, conducted May 23-26 among 1,005 adults, finds broad support across demographic groups for the view that federal spending in response to natural disasters is emergency aid and does not need to be offset by cuts to other programs. Comparable majorities of those living in the Northeast (62%), Midwest (58%), West (58%) and South (57%) all agree that federal spending in response to disasters is emergency aid.

Partisan Agreement that Disaster Spending Doesn't Require Offsets

<i>Federal spending on natural disasters ...</i>	Must be offset by cuts %	Is emergency aid, needs no offsets %	DK %
Total	29	59	13=100
Men	31	56	13=100
Women	26	60	13=100
18-29	42	48	11=100
30-49	30	57	14=100
50-64	24	65	11=100
65+	20	64	15=100
Northeast	29	62	8=100
Midwest	24	58	17=100
South	31	57	12=100
West	28	58	14=100
Republican	36	52	12=100
Democrat	23	69	8=100
Independent	29	57	14=100
<i>Among Reps, Rep-leaning Inds</i>			
Agree w/Tea Party	42	49	10=100
Disagree/No opinion	30	54	15=100
<i>Following Oklahoma news</i>			
Very closely	26	65	9=100
Less closely	31	53	16=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST May 23-26, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, those who agree with the Tea Party are divided: 49% say government disaster spending does not require offsetting cuts, 42% say that it does. By a 54%-30% margin, Republicans who do not agree with the

Tea Party, or have no opinion of the movement, say emergency disaster spending does not require offsetting cuts.

Young people under the age of 30 are about as likely to say emergency disaster spending requires offsetting cuts (42%) as not (48%). Broad majorities of all other age groups say federal spending in response to natural disasters is emergency aid that does not require cuts to other programs.

High Interest in Oklahoma Tornado

Nearly half of Americans (47%) say they paid very close attention to news about the deadly tornado that struck Moore, Oklahoma, last week. Interest in the tornado was only slightly lower than interest in Hurricane Sandy last fall (53%).

Interest in the storm far surpassed interest in the week's other top stories, including the murder of a British soldier in London (18% very closely), the debate over immigration policy in the U.S. (17%) and news about the Obama administration's policy on the use of military drones (17%).

Interest in Oklahoma Tornado and Other Recent Disasters

<i>Percent following very closely</i>	<i>%</i>
May 2013: Deadly tornado in Oklahoma	47
Oct. 2005: Hurricane Katrina and Rita	73
Jan. 2010: Major earthquake in Haiti	60
Jan. 2005: Tsunami in Indian Ocean	58
Mar. 2011: Japan earthquake and tsunami	55
Nov. 2012: Impact of Hurricane Sandy	53
Sept. 2008: Hurricane Ike	50
Aug. 2011: Hurricane Irene	45
May 2011: Deadly tornadoes in the Midwest	45
May 2011: Deadly storms in the South	45

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 23-26, 2013.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted May 23-26, 2013 among a national sample of 1,005 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 504 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 253 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,005	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	247	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	310	6.7 percentage points
Independents	334	6.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
May 23-26, 2013, OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,005

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. A deadly tornado in Oklahoma May 23-26, 2013	47	32	13	7	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
July 5-8, 2012: <i>Strong storms in the Midwest and East and continued power outages</i>	27	32	20	20	1
March 1-4, 2012: <i>Deadly storms and tornadoes in the Midwest</i>	33	31	17	18	1
May 26-29, 2011: <i>Deadly tornadoes in the Midwest</i>	45	33	13	9	*
May 5-8, 2011: <i>Tornadoes and flooding in the South and Midwest</i>	41	37	15	7	*
April 28-May 1, 2011: <i>Deadly storms in the South</i>	45	29	14	12	1
April 21-25, 2011: <i>Deadly storms in the South and Midwest</i>	29	33	18	20	*
June 13-16, 2008: <i>A tornado that killed four Boy Scouts at a camp in Iowa</i>	32	35	17	16	*
May 30-June 2, 2008: <i>Violent storms and tornadoes in the Midwest</i>	30	33	21	15	1
February 8-11, 2008: <i>Violent storms and tornadoes in the South and Midwest</i>	25	42	19	13	1
May 11-14, 2007: <i>Tornadoes and floods in the Midwest</i>	22	35	23	19	1
March 2-5, 2007: <i>Violent storms and tornadoes in the South and Midwest</i>	33	38	18	11	*
May, 1999: <i>Tornadoes in Oklahoma and Kansas</i>	38	40	15	6	1
b. Debate over immigration policy in the U.S. May 23-26, 2013	17	23	23	37	1
May 9-12, 2013	20	24	25	30	1
April 25-28, 2013	19	25	24	32	*
April 18-21, 2013	21	22	25	31	1
April 4-7, 2013	23	22	22	32	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
January 31-February 3, 2013: <i>Debate in Washington over immigration policy</i>	23	25	22	29	1
June 28-July 1, 2012: <i>The Supreme Court decision on Arizona's immigration law</i>	29	21	19	30	1
April 26-29, 2012: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	21	24	26	27	1
May 12-15, 2011	18	22	27	32	1
September 2-6, 2010	30	31	19	20	1
August 12-15, 2010	27	31	19	21	1
July 29-August 1, 2010: <i>A court ruling that stops most of Arizona's immigration law from going into effect</i>	40	32	17	10	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
July 8-11, 2010: <i>The U.S. Justice Department challenging the legality of Arizona's recent immigration law</i>	30	27	19	23	1
July 1-5, 2010: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	34	30	20	14	1
May 7-10, 2010: <i>A new Arizona law that gives police more authority to question people they suspect might be illegal immigrants</i>	38	27	13	21	1
April 30-May 3, 2010	36	31	13	20	*
October 12-15, 2007: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	23	29	19	29	*
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>The debate in Congress over new immigration policy</i>	26	30	21	23	*
June 22-25, 2007	24	28	22	26	*
June 15-18, 2007	22	32	21	25	*
June 8-11, 2007	24	29	20	26	1
May 24-27, 2007	27	31	22	19	1
April 12-16, 2007: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	21	29	24	26	*
August, 2006	34	40	16	9	1
June, 2006	36	41	15	7	1
May, 2006	44	33	13	9	1
April, 2006	39	34	16	10	1
December, 1994: <i>Passage of Proposition 187, the California law that bars education, health and welfare benefits from illegal immigrants and their children</i>	26	32	22	20	*
c. The murder of a British soldier in London, in a suspected terrorist attack					
May 23-26, 2013	18	24	21	35	2
December 5-8, 2008: <i>The terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India</i>	29	37	20	14	*
July 6-9, 2007: <i>The investigation into who was responsible for car bombs that were discovered in London and a car bomb that went off at an airport in Scotland</i>	34	30	19	16	1
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>British police finding and defusing a car bomb in London</i>	34	31	16	18	1
August, 2006: <i>British officials stopping a terrorist plot to blow up planes flying to the U.S.</i>	54	26	9	9	2
October, 2005: <i>The recent terrorist bombings in Bali, Indonesia</i>	13	31	26	29	1
July, 2005: <i>The terrorist bombings in London, England</i>	48	37	11	4	*
March, 2004: <i>The terrorist bombings in Madrid, Spain</i>	34	35	18	12	1
October, 2002: <i>The terrorist bombing of a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia</i>	20	34	25	20	1
d. The Obama administration's policy on the use of military drones					
May 23-26, 2013	17	24	22	36	1

ASK ALL:

PEW.2 Thinking about the federal government's response to major natural disasters, which comes closer to your view even if neither is exactly right? **[READ; RANDOMIZE]**¹

May 23-26

2013

29	Federal spending in response to natural disasters must be offset by cuts to other programs
59	Federal spending in response to natural disasters is emergency aid that does not need to be offset by cuts to other programs
13	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

¹ PEW.2 asked in conjunction with *The Washington Post*.