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Conservative Republicans, Tea Party Supporters Disagree

Most See Role for Government in Reducing Childhood Obesity

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Conservative Republicans, Tea Party Supporters Disagree Most See Role for Government in Reducing Childhood Obesity

Most Americans say the government should play a significant role in reducing obesity among children. But there is strong opposition to government involvement in this effort among conservative Republicans and Tea Party supporters.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Feb. 22-March 1 among 1,504 adults, finds that 57% say the government should play a significant role in reducing obesity among children, while 39% say it should not.

However, the public does not view the fight against obesity as a major policy priority for the president and Congress. In Pew Research's annual policy priorities poll in January, just 19% rated dealing with obesity in this country as a top priority, the lowest among 22 items tested; nearly as many (14%) said it should not be done at all. (*For more, see ["Economy Dominates Public's Agenda, Dim Hopes for the Future"](#).*)

The new survey finds wide partisan and ideological differences regarding the government's role in combating obesity. Overall, about seven-in-ten Democrats (71%) say government should have a significant role, compared with 57% of independents and 41% of Republicans.

Four-in-five liberal Democrats (80%) say the government should have a major role tackling this issue, a view shared by just 37% of conservative Republicans. Just a third

Minorities Favor Gov't Role in Obesity Fight, Whites Are Divided

Should government have a significant role in reducing childhood obesity?

	Should	Should not	Don't know	N
Total	57	39	3=100	1,504
White	49	47	4=100	1,085
Black	74	22	4=100	144
Hispanic	83	17	*=100	127
18-29	69	29	3=100	194
30-49	59	38	3=100	456
50-64	52	45	3=100	498
65+	45	49	6=100	341
Republicans	41	57	2=100	393
Cons Reps	37	61	2=100	286
Mod/Liberal Reps	50	48	2=100	101
Independents	57	41	2=100	551
Democrats	71	25	4=100	479
Cons/Mod Dems	66	30	3=100	276
Liberal Dems	80	15	5=100	186
<i>Tea Party movement:</i>				
Agree	33	65	2=100	347
Disagree/No opinion	64	33	4=100	1,115

PEW RESEARCH CENTER February 22-March 1, 2011.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

(33%) of those who agree with the Tea Party think government should have a significant role in fighting childhood obesity, while about twice as many (65%) say it should not.

Hispanics and African Americans are far more likely than whites to say the government should play a role in combating childhood obesity. Large majorities in both groups (83% of Hispanics, 74% of African Americans) express this view, while just 49% of whites agree.

Younger Americans are far more likely to see a significant role for government in cutting childhood obesity than are older Americans: Almost seven-in-ten (69%) of those younger than thirty say government should play a major role, while just 45% of those 65 and older agree.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 22-March 1, 2011 among a national sample of 1,504 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (1,021 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 483 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 213 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 and Spanish. 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, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2010 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the 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	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,504	3.0 percentage points
Republicans	393	6.0 percentage points
Democrats	479	5.5 percentage points
Independents	551	5.5 percentage points
Conservative Reps	286	7.0 percentage points
Moderate/Liberal Reps	101	12.0 percentage points
Conserv/Mod Dems	276	7.5 percentage points
Liberal Dems	186	9.0 percentage points
Tea party movement:		
Agree with movement	347	6.5 percentage points
Disagree/no opinion	1,115	4.0 percentage points
White	1,085	4.0 percentage points
Black	144	10.0 percentage points
Hispanic	127	10.5 percentage points
18-29	194	8.5 percentage points
30-49	456	6.0 percentage points
50-64	498	5.5 percentage points
65+	341	6.5 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.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
2011 MARCH POLITICAL TYPOLOGY SURVEY A
FINAL TOPLINE**

Survey A: February 22-March 1, 2011 N=1504

QUESTIONS A1-A4c, A24-A25, A45b, A60-A63 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS A4d, 17, A18-A19, 36-37, A45a, A46, A56-A59, A65 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 2-3, 5-16, 20-23, 26-35, 38-44, 47-55

ASK ALL SURVEY A:

Q.A64 Do you think government should or should not play a significant role in reducing obesity among children?

	Should play a significant role	Should not play a significant role	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	57	39	3

QUESTIONS A65-A67 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 68-88

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	16
Feb 2-7, 2011	24	31	39	3	*	2	16	16
Jan 5-9, 2011	27	32	35	4	*	2	15	14
Dec 1-5, 2010	25	33	34	5	1	2	13	14
Nov 4-7, 2010	26	30	37	4	*	2	17	13
Oct 27-30, 2010	25	34	31	6	1	4	13	11
Oct 13-18, 2010	25	31	36	4	*	3	16	13
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	24	32	39	2	*	2	15	17
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	26	33	34	4	*	3	14	14
Jun 16-20, 2010	27	34	34	3	1	2	15	15
Apr 21-26, 2010	26	33	36	3	1	3	16	13
Mar 11-21, 2010	28	34	32	3	*	3	13	12
Mar 10-14, 2010	22	33	37	6	*	3	14	13

Yearly Totals

2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT (PARTY=1,2):

PARTYSTR Do you consider yourself a STRONG [Republican/Democrat] or NOT a strong [Republican/Democrat]?

	Strong Republican	Not strong/ DK	Strong Democrat	Not strong/ DK
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	14	10=24%	18	15=33%
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	14	10=24%	19	13=32%
Oct 28-Nov 30, 2009	13	12=25%	20	11=32%
April, 2009	12	10=22%	20	13=33%
October, 2007 ¹	13	12=25%	19	14=33%
August, 2007	14	12=26%	18	14=32%
July, 2007	16	11=27%	19	13=32%
June, 2007	13	12=25%	19	15=34%
April, 2007	14	11=25%	15	13=28%
January, 2007	12	11=23%	17	14=31%
Mid-November, 2006	14	11=25%	22	14=36%
Late October, 2006	14	12=26%	18	14=32%
Early October, 2006	15	12=27%	19	15=34%
September, 2006	17	13=30%	18	16=34%
December, 2005	16	13=29%	20	14=34%
December, 2004	18	13=31%	19	15=34%
July, 2004	17	12=29%	20	13=33%
August, 2003	14	13=27%	15	16=31%
September, 2000	14	13=27%	19	15=34%
Late September, 1999	10	14=24%	15	16=31%
August, 1999	11	14=25%	15	18=33%
November, 1997	11	14=25%	14	18=32%
October, 1995	11	19=30%	14	16=30%
April, 1995	15	15=30%	14	15=29%
October, 1994	16	15=31%	18	14=32%
July, 1994	13	16=29%	15	18=33%
June, 1992	11	17=28%	14	18=32%
May, 1990	13	15=28%	16	17=33%
February, 1989	15	16=31%	17	21=38%
May, 1988	13	15=28%	19	19=38%
January, 1988	12	15=27%	19	20=39%
May, 1987	11	14=25%	18	19=37%

¹ Data from Pew Research Center Social & Demographic Trends.

ASK ALL:

TEAPARTY2 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	<i>Not heard of/ DK</i>
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	20	25	52	2	2	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 ²	22	22	53	2	2	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	24	22	50	2	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	22	26	49	2	2	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	27	22	49	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	29	25	32	--	1	13
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	28	24	30	--	1	16
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	29	26	32	--	1	13
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	22	18	37	--	1	21
Jun 16-20, 2010	24	18	30	--	*	27
May 20-23, 2010	25	18	31	--	1	25
Mar 11-21, 2010	24	14	29	--	1	31

² In the February 2-7, 2011 survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May through October, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March it was described as "the Tea Party Protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."