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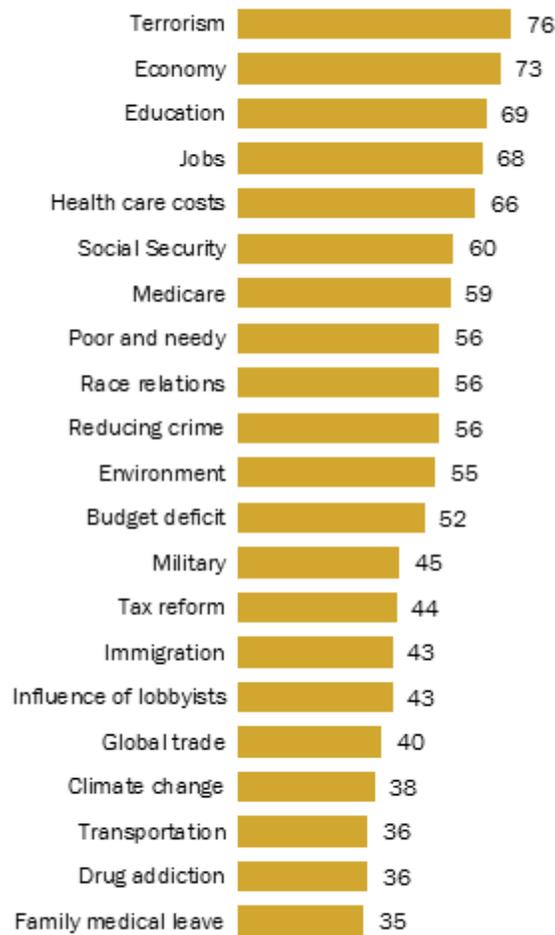
JANUARY 24, 2017

After Seismic Political Shift, Modest Changes in Public's Policy Agenda

More view the environment, foreign trade as top policy priorities

Public's policy priorities for 2017

% rating each a top priority for Trump and Congress



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-publics-policy-agenda/1-17/>) As Donald Trump enters the White House, the nation's leading policy priorities are little changed from the final years of Barack Obama's presidency. And the partisan divisions over many of the public's priorities – from dealing with global climate change to strengthening the nation's military – remain as wide as ever.

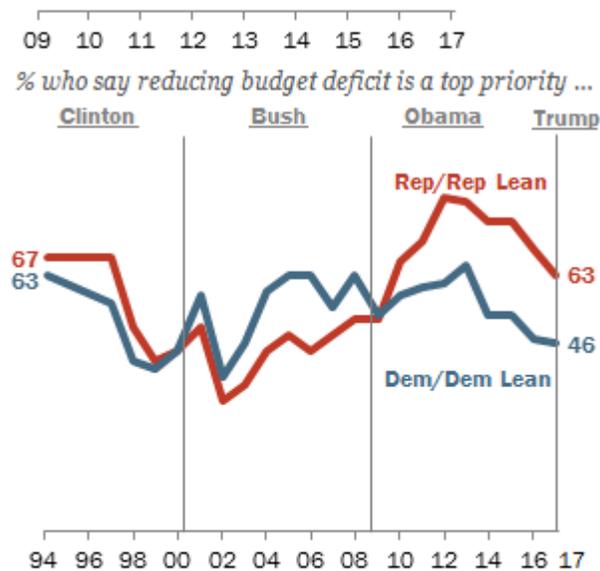
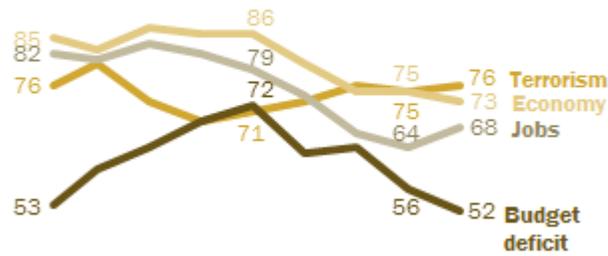
Roughly three-quarters say that defending the country from terrorism (76%) and strengthening the economy (73%) should be top priorities for Congress and the new president. And two-thirds or more prioritize improving the educational system (69%), improving the job situation (68%) and reducing health care costs (66%).

These all have ranked among the public's top policy priorities in recent years. Still, there are some changes in the public's to-do list: A majority of Americans (55%) now cite protecting the environment as a top priority, up from 47% a year ago.

Global trade, which ranks relatively low on the public's policy agenda, is viewed as more important than in the past. Currently, 40% say dealing with global trade issues should be a top policy priority, up from 31% last year. On the other hand, the share viewing immigration as a top priority has declined, from 51% to 43%, since January 2016.

How the deficit rose – and fell – among public’s priorities during Obama years

% saying each is a top priority ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-publics-policy-agenda/2-15/>) The national survey, conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017 among 1,502 adults, finds little change over the past year in views of the importance of reducing the budget deficit. But the deficit is viewed as a less important priority today than it was during most of Obama’s second term.

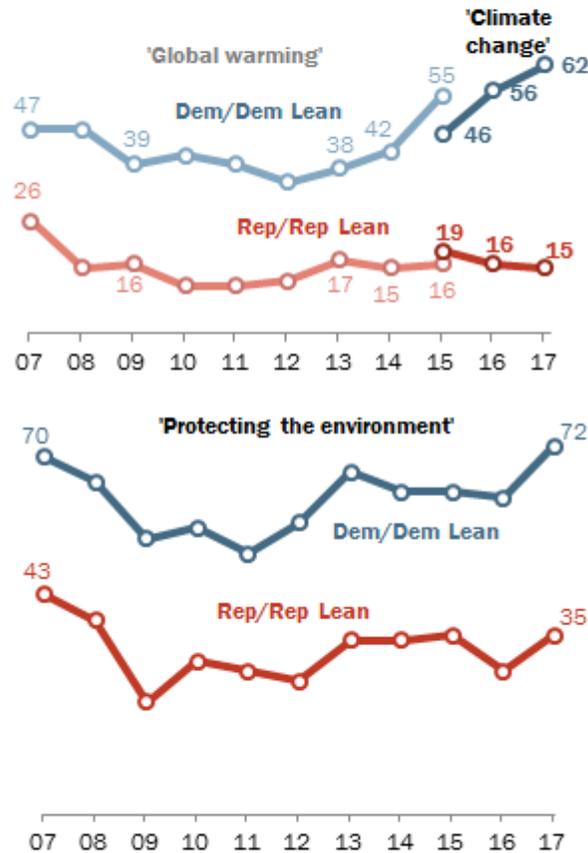
Currently, 52% say reducing the budget deficit should be a top priority for the president and Congress. Four years ago, after Obama’s reelection, 72% viewed cutting the deficit as a top priority.

About six-in-ten Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (63%) say reducing the deficit should be a top policy priority; four years ago, 81% of Republicans viewed it as a top priority. Over this period, the share of Democrats and Democratic leaners citing the deficit as a top priority has declined from 65% to 46%.

Widening partisan gap over dealing with climate change

Democrats increasingly view dealing with climate change as a top priority

% rating each a top priority for Trump and Congress ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-publics-policy-agenda/3-17/>) As in previous policy priority surveys, the widest partisan gap is on the importance of dealing with global climate change. About six-in-ten Democrats (62%) say this should be a top priority for the president and Congress. Just 15% of Republicans say the same – making climate change by far the lowest-ranked of 21 policy priorities among Republicans.

Republicans have ranked global climate change – or global warming in surveys prior to 2015 – at or close to the bottom of the list of policy priorities for more than a decade. At the same time, the share of Democrats who rate climate change as a top priority has steadily increased in recent years – from 46% in 2015 to 62% currently.

There also is a sizable partisan gap over the importance of environmental protection as a policy priority. While 72% of Democrats say protecting the environment should be a top priority for Congress and the president, just 35% of Republicans say this.

Majorities in both parties now prioritize reducing health care costs

Republicans increasingly view reduction of health care costs as a top priority

% who rate reducing health care costs a top priority

	2009	2013	2016	2017	'09-'17 change
	%	%	%	%	
Total	59	63	61	66	+7
Rep/Rep Lean	44	52	57	69	+25
Dem/Dem Lean	68	73	64	63	-5
R-D gap	-24	-21	-7	+6	

Note: Significant differences in **bold**.
Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-publics-policy-agenda/4-15/>) While there are wide partisan differences on whether to repeal the Affordable Care Act (<http://www.people-press.org/2016/12/08/4-views-of-the-aca-medicare-and-the-nations-economy/#the-future-of-the-aca>), majorities of both Republicans (69%) and Democrats (63%) say reducing health care costs should be a top goal of the president and Congress.

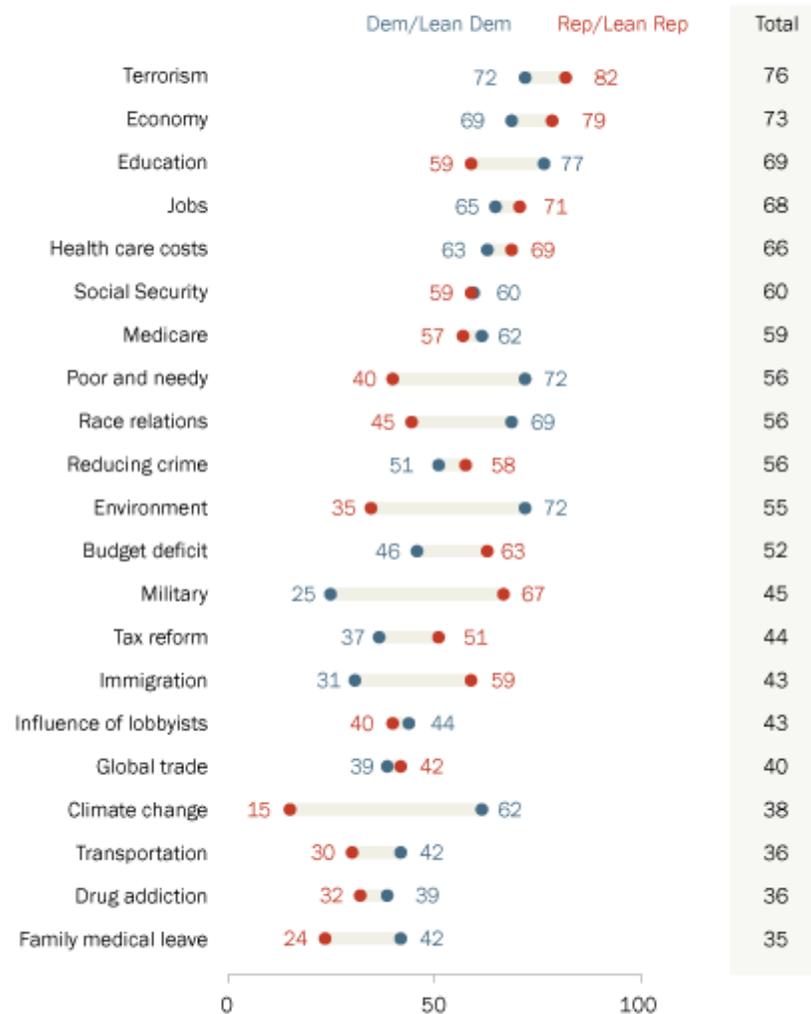
For Republicans, this represents a sizable change in attitudes. In 2009, just 44% of Republicans cited the reduction of health care costs as a top priority. Over the past year alone, the share of Republicans who say cutting health care costs should be a top priority has increased from 57% to 69%.

Democrats' views have shown less change over this period. As a result, partisan differences over this issue are much narrower today than in 2013 or 2009.

Wide partisan gaps on many priorities, common ground on others

Partisans differ over priority Trump and Congress should give to immigration, poverty, race relations

% rating each a top priority among ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-publics-policy-agenda/5-15/>) Aside from climate change and the environment, some of the largest partisan gaps are on the importance of strengthening the military, dealing with the poor and needy and immigration.

Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to say that strengthening the military should be a top policy priority. Two-thirds of Republicans and Republican leaners (67%) say this should be a top goal of the president and Congress, compared with just 25% of Democrats. For Democrats, strengthening the military is the lowest-ranked policy goal.

In addition, nearly twice as many Republicans (59%) as Democrats (31%) rate dealing with immigration as a top policy priority. And while 51% of Republicans view reforming the tax system as a top priority, fewer Democrats (37%) say the same.

(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-public-policy-agenda/3-1-2017-9-46-58-am/>) By contrast, more Democrats than Republicans view dealing with the problems of the poor and needy (72% of Democrats, 40% of Republicans), and dealing with race relations (69% of Democrats, 45% of Republicans) as top policy goals.

There are several policy goals that Republicans and Democrats have in common, however. With proposals to revamp entitlement programs being considered by the GOP-led Congress, 62% of Democrats and 57% of Republicans rate “taking steps to making the Medicare system financially sound” as a top priority.

Nearly identical majorities in both parties (60% of Democrats, 59% of Republicans) also say taking steps to make Social Security financially sound should be a top priority.

Age and policy priorities

Leading policy priorities for Republicans and Democrats

% saying each is a top priority ...

Rep/Rep Lean	Dem/Dem Lean
82% Terrorism	77% Education
79% Economy	72% Environment
71% Jobs	72% Terrorism
69% Health costs	72% Poor people
67% Military	69% Race relations
63% Budget deficit	69% Economy
59% Social Security	65% Jobs
59% Education	63% Health costs
59% Immigration	62% Climate change
58% Crime	62% Medicare

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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Older adults give greater priority to military, immigration and entitlements

% rating each a top priority for Trump and Congress ...

	18- 29	30- 49	50- 64	65+	Young- Old diff
	%	%	%	%	
Strengthening the military	33	39	51	58	-25
Reducing lobbyist influence	31	36	51	56	-25
Improving transportation	27	35	34	52	-25
Immigration	36	39	45	56	-20
Medicare	52	59	58	70	-18
Social Security	55	53	64	72	-17
Improving job situation	58	67	76	73	-15
Terrorism	71	69	84	84	-13
Tax reform	39	43	44	50	-11
Health care costs	59	66	70	69	-10
Drug addiction	35	33	35	44	-9
Strengthening economy	69	75	71	76	-7
Reducing budget deficit	47	50	61	53	-6
Global trade issues	37	38	47	42	-5
Reducing crime	57	47	64	61	-4
Education	73	69	64	70	+3
Problems of poor & needy	62	56	54	57	+5
Medical leave	41	33	33	34	+7
Addressing race relations	66	58	47	56	+10
Global climate change	48	37	33	34	+14
Protecting environment	64	59	48	48	+16

Note: Significant differences in bold.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 4-9, 2017.

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(<http://www.people-press.org/2017/01/24/after-seismic-political-shift-modest-changes-in-publics-policy-agenda/7-14/>) The policy priorities of young people and older Americans differ in key respects. Older adults are more likely to prioritize strengthening the military, reducing the influence of lobbyists, immigration, Medicare and Social Security, among other issues. Conversely, younger people are more likely than their elders to prioritize environmental concerns.

While a 58% majority of those 65 and older say strengthening the military is a top priority, just a third of those younger than 30 say the same.

Older adults (65 and up) also attach greater importance than younger people (18-29) to reducing the influence of lobbyists and special interests in Washington (56% vs. 31%), improving transportation (52% vs. 27%), addressing immigration (56% vs. 36%), and taking steps to make Medicare (70% vs. 52%) and Social Security (72% vs. 55%) financially secure.

For their part, those under 30 years of age are more likely than those 65 and older to say that environmental protection (64% vs. 48%) and global climate change (48% vs. 34%) should be top priorities.

Majorities of both those 18-29 and those 65 and older say that addressing race relations should be a top priority for Congress and the president; yet for young people this is a top tier issue, while for older Americans race relations ranks closer to the middle of the policies list.