

MEMORANDUM

TO: Half In Ten Campaign
FROM: Guy Molyneux, Hart Research Associates
DATE: November 22, 2010
RE: Key Findings From Survey On Poverty Issues

From November 5 to 8, 2010, Hart Research Associates conducted a telephone survey for the Half in Ten Campaign among 802 registered voters across the country. The survey's margin of error is ± 3.5 percentage points for the full sample, and is higher among subgroups. This memorandum outlines this poll's key findings on voters' views of poverty issues.

Half Of All Americans Have A Direct Personal Connection To Poverty

- Nearly half of all voters surveyed say they have a family member who is poor today. When asked to think about their family, including those they live with and other close relatives such as aunts, uncles, and cousins, 48% say they have one or more poor family members. Note that this proportion is likely to be even higher among all American adults (if non-voters were included).
 - African-American (68%) and Hispanic voters (58%) especially are likely to report having poor family members, although a substantial 44% of white voters also have a poor relative.
 - A majority of non-college-educated voters say they have poor family members (53%), and 41% of college-educated voters say the same.

The Public Supports Continuing TANF Emergency Program

- By a very robust 79% to 14%, voters favor Congress continuing to fund the TANF Emergency Program, which is described as states partnering with the private sector to create temporary subsidized jobs to move low-income parents from welfare to work.
 - Voters across the country express deep support for continuing to fund the TANF Emergency Program, with a strong majority of at least 75% in each region favoring its continuation.

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- Politically, the TANF Emergency Program receives nearly unanimous support from Democrats (90%), as well as strong support from both independents (77%) and Republicans (70%).
- Support for the TANF Emergency Program cuts across socioeconomic lines, as it receives nearly the same level of support from non-college grads (80%) as it does from college graduates (79%). There is overwhelming support from both white non-college voters (81%) and white college voters (78%).
- Exposure to poverty increases support, as 84% of those who say they have family members who are poor favor funding the TANF Emergency Fund. Even for voters who do not have poor family members, support for the TANF Emergency Fund is at a high level of 77%.

Voters Do Not Want To Cut Low-Income Programs To Reduce The Deficit

- Voters reject the idea that programs that support low-income families and children should be cut to reduce the budget deficit. Only 18% say they want to cut low-income programs to reduce the deficit, while nearly four in five (78%) say that Congress should find other ways to reduce the budget deficit. In addition, 65% of the voting public *strongly* feels that we should find other ways to reduce the deficit, more than three times the size of the group that favors cuts to low-income programs.
 - Democrats and independents overwhelmingly support the idea that Congress needs to find other ways to reduce the deficit and not cut low-income programs (88% and 80%, respectively), and a strong majority of Republicans agree (67%). Even among voters who supported a Republican House candidate in the 2010 midterm elections, fully 65% reject cuts in low-income programs to help reduce the deficit.
 - A slight difference exists across socioeconomic lines, as non-college graduates are especially strong in their opposition to cutting low-income programs to reduce the deficit (84%). Still, a strong majority of college graduates (68%) and white college graduates (65%) also want Congress to find other ways to cut the deficit.
 - More than seven in 10 voters in every region of the country support finding other ways to reduce the deficit.