SOCIAL SECURITY SENTIMENTS

Question: How confident are you, yourself, in the future of the Social Security system. Would you say you are very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Source: Survey by the American Council of Life Insurance (Monitoring Attitudes of the Public), latest that of May 20-June 10, 1989.

Confidence in the future of the Social Security system declined during the 1970s and 1980s but showed an uptick in 1988 and 1989. The elderly remain confident, while the young are not.
Question: There has recently been a suggestion that the 1990 Social Security tax increase be cancelled. Those in favor of cancelling the increase say the Social Security fund is running a surplus and that this tax increase is unnecessary now. Those opposed to cancelling the tax increase say the surplus is needed to hold down the size of the federal budget deficit and to make sure the Social Security fund is sound for the future. Do you favor or oppose the proposed cancellation of the Social Security tax increase?

- Favor cancelling the Social Security tax increase
- Oppose
- Not sure

**National**
- 39%
- 53%
- 8%

**By age:**
- 18-34 years: 37%, 56%, 7%
- 35-49 years: 40%, 51%, 9%
- 50-64 years: 45%, 47%, 8%
- 65 and older: 36%, 53%, 11%

**By income:**
- Less than $20,000: 38%, 54%, 10%
- $20,000-$50,000: 39%, 54%, 7%
- $50,001 and over: 43%, 50%, 7%

**Question:** Do you and your family pay more money to the government in Social Security taxes, or more in Federal income taxes?

- Pay more money to the government in Social Security taxes
- Federal income taxes
- Same
- Don't pay
- Don't know/no answer

**National**
- 15%
- 64%
- 4%
- 6%

**By age:**
- 18-29 years: 19%, 67%, 3%
- 30-44 years: 18%, 66%, 4%
- 45-64 years: 13%, 64%, 8%
- 65 and older: 6%, 52%, 5%

**By income:**
- Less than $15,000: 17%, 42%, 7%
- $15,000-$29,999: 16%, 63%, 3%
- $30,000-$50,000: 16%, 69%, 7%
- $50,001 and over: 11%, 75%, 4%

**Question:** If taxes are cut, which would you most prefer—to cut the federal income tax, or to cut the Social Security tax?

- Would most prefer to cut the Federal income tax
- Social Security tax
- Both/neither

**National**
- 78%
- 14%
- 4%

**By age:**
- 18-29 years: 82%
- 30-44 years: 79%
- 45-64 years: 79%
- 65 and older: 67%

**By income:**
- Less than $15,000: 74%
- $15,000-$29,999: 79%
- $30,000-$50,000: 81%
- $50,001 and over: 78%


Note: * = 2% or less.

In early January, majorities in an NBC/WSJ question opposed cancelling the Social Security tax increase. In a CBS/NYT question, majorities preferred a cut in the federal income tax to one in Social Security.
**THE LEAST FAIR TAX**

**Question:** Which do you think is the worst tax—that is, the least fair?

Least fair tax is...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Federal income tax</th>
<th>State income tax</th>
<th>State sales tax</th>
<th>Local property tax</th>
<th>Social Security tax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>1988*</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

*Note:* "Don't know" not shown. * = results when Social Security tax is included in the question.


In 1989, the local property tax overtook the federal income tax as the worst tax. When the Social Security tax was included in the evaluation in 1988 and 1989, it was the third most resented tax.