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TRUMP'S BUDGET AT ODDS WITH PUBLIC'S PRIORITIES

New In-depth Survey Finds 10 Major Spending Gaps

Note: *As compared to an earlier release this version has a slight correction for the amount of reduced spending favored for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and thus for the total reduction supported.*

WASHINGTON – An innovative survey from the University of Maryland's Program for Public Consultation (PPC) reveals significant differences between the budget proposed in the Trump administration's "Budget Blueprint" for 2018 and what the public recommends. The findings were released today by Voice Of the People.

For the top ten areas, the gaps between the spending proposals of the majority of the public and those of the Trump administration total $137.6 billion. For Republicans these gaps are narrower totaling $86.9 billion, while for Democrats the total is $188.5 billion.

"The gaps between the public's proposed budget and the Trump administration's budget are quite substantial," said PPC Director Steven Kull, who directed the survey, "especially when it comes to military spending."

Working on-line, a representative sample of more than 1800 registered voters were presented the authorized Federal budget for 2017, broken into 31 line items, and given the opportunity to make changes for 2018 as they saw fit, getting feedback as they went along about the impact of their choices on the budget deficit.

The ten major gaps between the majority position of the public and the Trump Budget Blueprint include:

Military Spending – $94.4 billion: By far the biggest gap is for the three components of military spending. Overall the Trump administration favors a $53.4 billion increase while the public favors a $39 billion cut – a $94.4 billion gap. For the base Pentagon budget, the Trump blueprint proposes a ten percent increase of $52 billion, while the majority of voters propose a five percent cut of $26 billion. For operations in in Afghanistan and against the Islamic State in Iraq, the administration wants to keep the current levels of

$65 billion, however the public wants to see this cut back by $13 billion. For nuclear weapons, Trump calls for a seven percent buildup of $1.4 billion, while the public does not support an increase.

The gap between Trump's military spending levels and those preferred by a majority of Republicans is smaller at $58.4 billion. A majority of Republicans favor no increase in the base budget, no increase in nuclear weapons spending and a $5 billion cut for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Democrats favor a $76 billion cut for the base budget, $15 billion for Afghanistan and Iraq and no increase for nuclear weapons—a $144.4 billion gap with Trump's budget.

Education – $9 billion: For the Department of Education, overall the Trump administration makes a 13 percent reduction of $9 billion. The public overall does not make any changes to education. Republicans make a $9 billion cut ($5 billion for K-12, $4 billion for higher education), while Democrats make an increase of $3 billion ($2 billion for special education and $1 billion for higher education).

Veterans Affairs – $7.9 billion: For Veterans Affairs, Trump proposes a 4.5 percent increase of $7.9 billion (covering both mandatory and discretionary spending). But the public overall and neither Republicans nor Democrats want to see any increase.

Public Housing – $6.2 billion: For public housing, the Trump administration calls for a 13 percent cut of $6.2 billion. The public overall and the Democrats do not make a change, though a majority of Republicans call for a six percent cut of $3 billion.

State Department and AID – $6.1 billion: For spending on the State Department and the Agency for International Development the administration seeks a 28 percent cut of $10.1 billion from the core spending of $36 billion. The public agrees that there should be a cut, but only an 11 percent cut of $4 billion. A majority of Democrats do not make any cuts, but Republicans do cut $10 billion – in line with the president's plan.

Medical Research – $5.8 billion: For spending on medical research the Trump administration favors a 17 percent cut of $5.8 billion for the National Institute of Health. The public overall and Democrats do not support any change, while Republicans are largely in line with the Trump administration, favoring a $5 billion cut.

Homeland Security – $4.8 billion: For Homeland Security the Trump administration wants a 7 percent increase of $2.8 billion, in part to make a down payment on the border wall with Mexico. The public overall and Democrats cut $2 billion. Republicans do not favor any change up or down, though "border protection" is mentioned as one of the activities in this category.

Space Program – $3.9 billion: The Trump administration only trims $100 million from the space program. However the public wants a $2 billion cut, though Republicans cut $4 billion and Democrats do not support a change.

Pollution Control – $2.6 billion: For spending on the Environmental Protection Agency, the Trump administration favors a 31 percent cut of $2.6 billion, while the public overall does not favor any change for pollution control. A majority of Republicans favors an 11 percent cut of $1 billion, while Democrats favor an 11 percent increase of $1 billion.

Mass Transit – $2 billion: The Trump administration calls for a $2 billion cut to Amtrak while the public overall does not favor any change in spending on mass transit. Republicans favor a $1 billion cut to mass transit, while Democrats favor a $1 billion increase.

The survey was fielded March 8-16 with a national probability-based sample of 1,817 registered voters, provided by Nielsen Scarborough from its sample of respondents, recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households. The margin of error was +/-2.3 percent.

The full report, which includes additional spending items and proposals for revenues, will be forthcoming in the next weeks.

A full chart of these spending recommendations with party breakdowns can be seen at: http://www.publicconsultation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Comparing-Budgets.pdf

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