



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

AMERICANS ON US CONTRIBUTION TO FIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



A National Survey of Registered Voters

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OVERVIEW

In 2000, all 191 UN member countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals, which committed world leaders to a set of goals to move toward reducing extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, ending gender disparities in education, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability, and combating diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

By 2015, many countries had made progress towards achieving these goals. Some of these goals were achieved. Most notable, the number of people living in extreme poverty was cut in half. But most goals were not fully met.

In 2015, UN member countries came together again and created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals were significantly more ambitious than the MDGS and also included an additional nine goals, all to be reached by 2030.

As the deadline for meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals draws closer and many of the keystone aid organizations face funding gaps, it is important to understand what role the US public wants their government -- the largest donor in absolute terms -- to play in addressing these global issues.

In response to this query, the Program for Public Consultation (PPC) of the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland has undertaken a study of US public attitudes on US attitudes about providing foreign aid to address global problems and specifically the US response to the following SDGs:

- Eliminating chronic hunger
- Universal access to clean drinking water and sanitation
- Universal access to vaccines
- Universal access to education
- Universal access to energy

Survey Design

Respondents were introduced to the UN's Millennium Development Goals and the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which guide much foreign aid. It went as follows:

As you may know in 2000, all of the member countries of the United Nations (including the US), plus international agencies and international non-profit aid organizations came together and agreed on a set of worldwide goals to achieve by 2015. This included goals of:

- *lowering the number of people in extreme poverty*
- *reducing hunger*
- *providing access to healthcare*
- *ensuring education for all children*

and others.

These were known as the Millennium Development Goals. Some of these goals were achieved. Most notable, the number of people living in extreme poverty was cut in half. But other goals were not fully met.

In 2015, another set of goals was developed with the aim of achieving them by 2030. These are known as the Sustainable Development Goals.

They then evaluated three pairs of arguments for and against the US increasing its foreign aid, in order to solve global problems.

After evaluating arguments for and against increasing US foreign aid, respondents evaluated five Sustainable Development Goals. For each, they were told about the problem in need of solving, how much was needed to achieve the SDG, what the US' would pay, as well as how much this would increase their federal taxes. It went as follows:

We are now going to explore what needs to be done to meet these Sustainable Development goals, primarily for people in poor countries. In each case, there are steps that the governments in those low-income countries need to take. There are also steps that businesses need to take to invest in those low-income countries.

But a critical element is additional aid that would be needed from the high-income countries. All of the high-income countries, including the US, participated in setting these goals. Since the goals were set, estimates were done to establish how much it would cost to meet these goals. So, the question now is whether the high-income countries will commit to contributing the necessary additional funds to meet the goals.

A proposed framework is to have all high-income countries contribute the same amount in terms of the percentage of their economy. That means the countries with larger economies would pay more. But all would be paying the same percentage of their economies.

For each goal we will tell you the estimate for how much additional aid will be required to meet that goal and what the US share would be, based on the size of its economy compared to the other high-income countries.

Respondents were also informed how any increased spending on foreign aid could affect their taxes, as follows:

There are various ways that the US could raise the necessary funds including increasing the US debt, cutting spending or raising taxes. For the sake of this exercise we will assume that the funds would be raised by increasing all Federal taxes equally (except those committed to Social Security and Medicare).

This would include the amount of Federal income taxes you pay. So, say that to meet a certain goal, the total of US taxes would need to go up 1%. This means that the total of your income taxes would go up 1%. So, say your income taxes are \$5,000 a year. A 1% increase would mean that you would pay an extra \$50 per year.

For each SDG, they could choose whether, "if other countries would be willing to contribute their part", the US should contribute its share. If not, they could choose whether the US should contribute half its part.

Data sources: How much increased spending would be needed to achieve each SDG was taken from UN and World Bank reports. How much the US currently spends was calculated from the OECD's Official Development Assistance database. The US' part was calculated based on the US' share of GDP among members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committees, which is made up of the primary donor countries.

The content was reviewed by proponents and opponents of the proposal to ensure the briefing was accurate and balanced, and that the strongest arguments were presented.

Fielding: The survey was conducted online from October 22-30, 2019 with a national probability-based sample provided by Nielsen Scarborough from Nielsen Scarborough's sample of respondents, who were recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households. The sample included 2,417 respondents with a margin of error of +/- 2.0%.

The sample was subsequently weighted by age, income, gender, education, and race with benchmarks from the Census' 2014 Current Population Survey of Registered Voters.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Eliminating Chronic Hunger

To help reach the SDG of eliminating chronic hunger, two thirds supported the US contributing its part if other countries would contribute their part. The US part was specified as \$36 billion a year and respondents were told this would require a 1.7% increase in federal taxes, Supporters included 87% of Democrats and 43% of Republicans. A bipartisan majority of 72% recommended the US contribute at least half its part, or \$18 billion a year, including nine in ten Democrats and a modest majority of Republicans.

Universal Access to Clean Water and Sanitation

To help reach the SDG of ensuring universal access to clean drinking water and sanitary toilets, six in ten supported the US contributing its part which was specified as \$42 billion a year and would require a 1.9% increase in federal taxes. This included eight in ten Democrats and four in ten Republicans. A bipartisan majority of seven in ten supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$21 billion, including nine in ten Democrats and a slight majority of Republicans.

Universal Access to Vaccines

To help achieve the SDG of universal access to vaccines, a bipartisan majority of 69% supported the US contributing its part-- \$11 billion a year, which would require a 0.5% increase in federal taxes. Nearly nine in ten Democrats were in support, as were a bare majority of Republicans. A majority of 77% supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$5.5 billion, including over nine in ten Democrats and over six in ten Republicans.

Universal Access to Education for Children

To help reach the SDG of providing universal access to K-12 education, a majority of 59% supported the US contributing its parts -- \$28 billion a year, which would require a 1.2% increase in federal taxes. This included 84% of Democrats, and 34% of Republicans. A majority of seven in ten supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$14 billion a year, including nine in ten Democrats, and 46% of Republicans.

Universal Access to Energy

To help reach the SDG of providing universal access to energy, primarily electricity, 53% supported the US contributing its parts -- \$13 billion a year, which would require a 0.6% increase in federal taxes. This included 76% of Democrats and just 28% of Republicans. A majority of 63% supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$6.5 billion a year, including 85% of Democrats and four in ten Republicans.

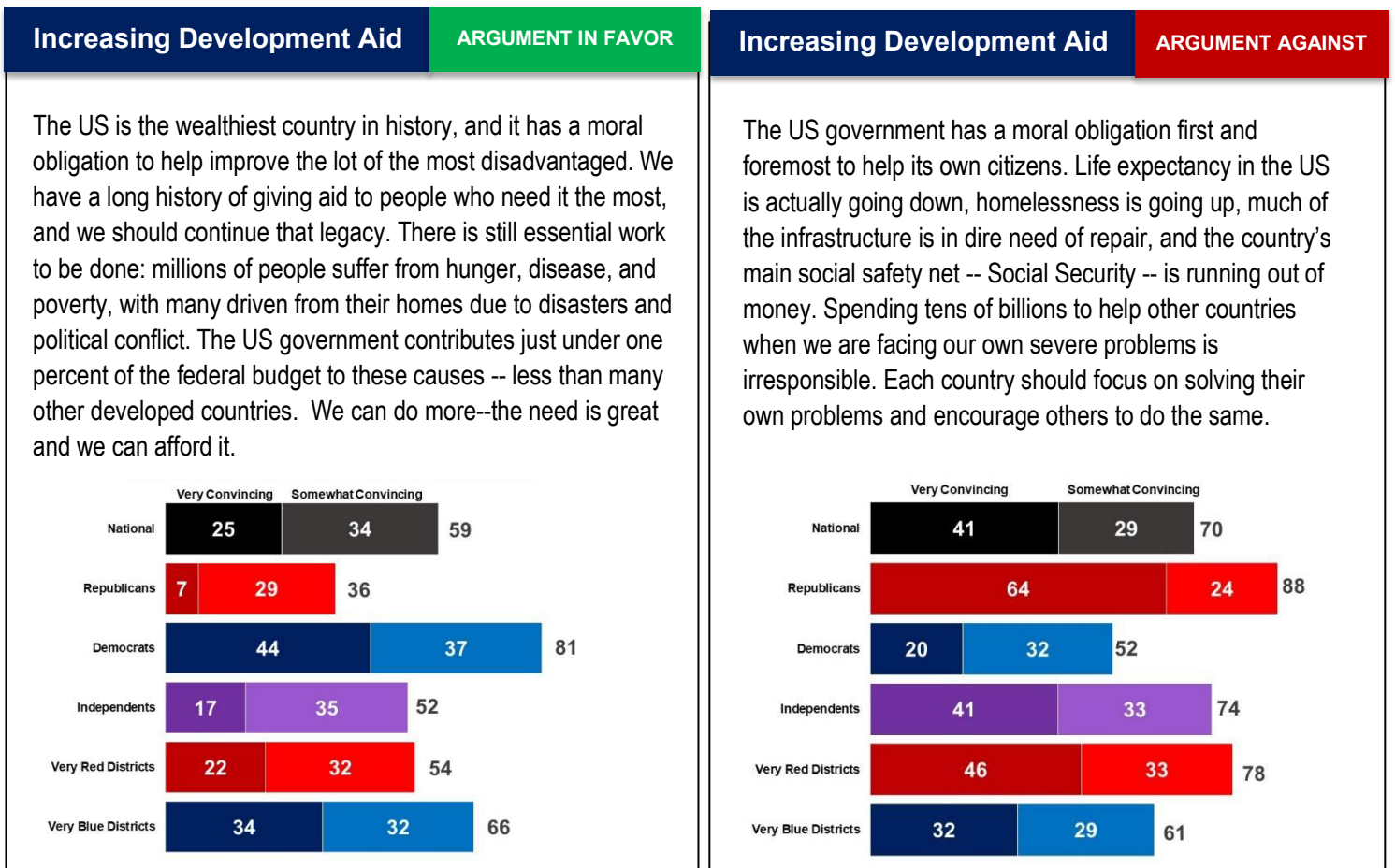
FINDINGS

Initial Evaluation of Arguments

Respondents first evaluated three pairs of arguments were evaluated for and against the US increasing its foreign aid, in order to solve global problems as outlined by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. All arguments were found convincing by a majority and on balance the arguments in favor and the arguments against were found equally convincing. However the pro arguments did much better among Democrats, and the con arguments much better among Republicans.

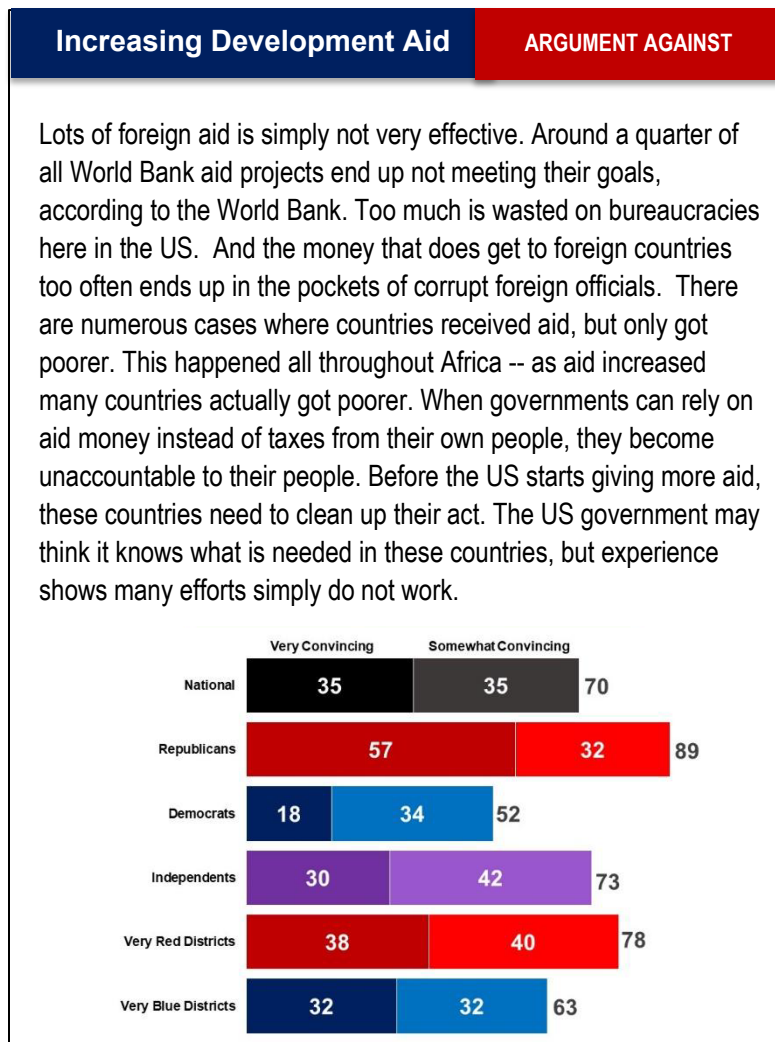
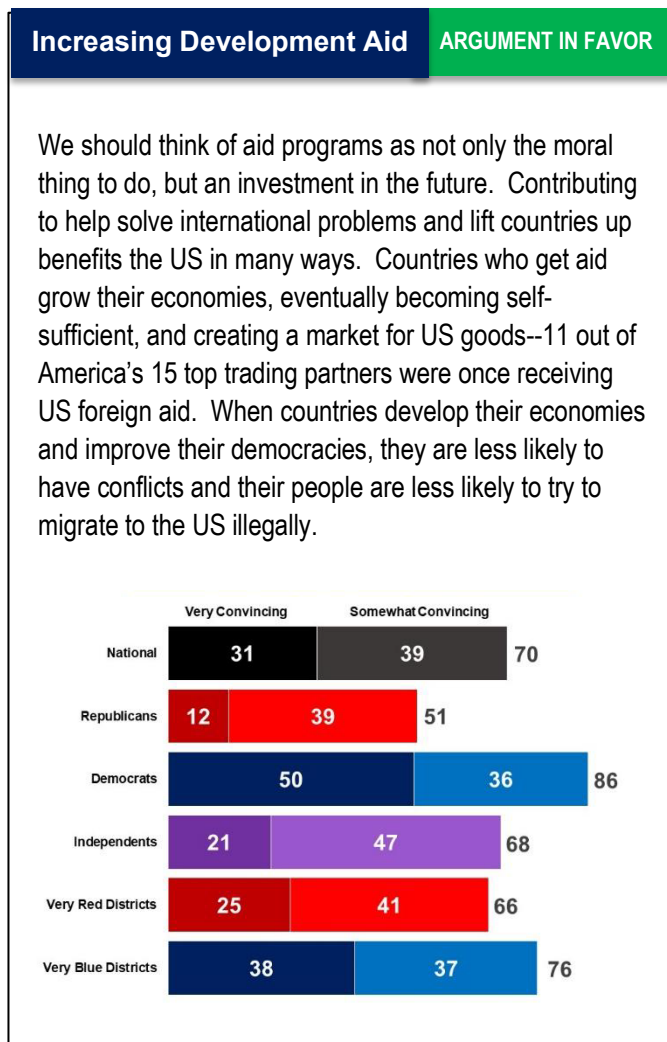
The first pro argument spoke to the ‘moral obligation’ the US has to improve the lives of the disadvantaged around the world, and how relatively little the US contributes relative to most other developed countries. Around six in ten found this convincing, including eight in ten Democrats. Just 36% of Republicans were convinced.

The first con argument spoke to the ‘moral obligation’ the US has to improve the lives of US citizens first and foremost, and how many expensive problems the US is currently facing. This was found convincing by seven in ten, including 88% of Republicans. A bare majority of Democrats (52%) felt the same.



The next pro argument underscored how improvements in other parts of the world are an ‘investment in the future’ that help the US in the long run, by expanding markets and increasing stability. Seven in ten found this convincing, including 86% of Democrats. Republicans were split with 51% convinced.

The next con argument stressed that aid is not very effective, and that it can be pocketed by foreign officials, and that before countries get aid they need to ‘clean up their act’. This was found convincing by seven in ten, including nearly nine in ten Republicans. A bare majority of Democrats (52%) agreed.



The last pro argument highlighted the positive impact of aid throughout the last few decades, from lives saved to children educated. Three in four found this convincing, including six in ten Republicans and nearly nine in ten Democrats.

The last con argument emphasized the point that aid can create dependency, can make governments unaccountable when they no longer need to rely on their own citizens, and can hurt local producers. This was found convincing by six in ten, including 83% of Republicans. Just 36% of Democrats concurred.

Increasing Development Aid **ARGUMENT IN FAVOR**

When we make a commitment to helping people get on their feet it can make a big difference. For example: International aid over the last 25 years has saved 700 million lives, helped reduce the number of malnourished people by almost half, and helped reduce the number in living extreme poverty by more than half. This is from health aid which has provided 500 million children vaccines and helped stop disease epidemics, and food aid which has provided nutritional meals to millions of children across the world and helped ensure their physical and mental development. Aid through education and economic development has helped people be more productive and escape poverty, which creates healthier and more stable economies and greater economic growth for everybody.

Group	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total
National	35	40	75
Republicans	15	46	60
Democrats	55	34	89
Independents	28	45	72
Very Red Districts	29	46	75
Very Blue Districts	41	38	80

Increasing Development Aid **ARGUMENT AGAINST**

While aid may be able to produce some short terms gains, it can also create dependency. People get in the habit of expecting handouts. And when governments receive foreign aid, they do not need to rely on their people for taxes as much, which makes them become less accountable to their own citizens. By making goods more readily available at no cost or low cost, aid can actually undercut local producers, making it harder for them to make a sustainable business.

Group	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Total
National	28	32	60
Republicans	47	36	83
Democrats	12	25	36
Independents	28	40	67
Very Red Districts	31	35	67
Very Blue Districts	23	30	53

Eliminating Chronic Hunger

To help reach the SDG of eliminating chronic hunger, two thirds supported the US contributing its part if other countries would contribute their part. The US part was specified as \$36 billion a year and respondents were told this would require a 1.7% increase in federal taxes, Supporters included 87% of Democrats and 43% of Republicans. A bipartisan majority of 72% recommended the US contribute at least half its part, or \$18 billion a year, including nine in ten Democrats and a modest majority of Republicans.

The SDG of eliminating chronic hunger was presented as follows:

One key goal is to eliminate chronic hunger. Chronic hunger means that people do not have enough food on a long term and persistent basis. It does not refer to hunger that might result from a natural disaster or an outbreak of a civil conflict. The UN estimates that about 815 million people, or about 11% of the world's population, are suffering from chronic hunger. This number has been going down in recent decades--in 1990 about one billion people suffered from chronic hunger.

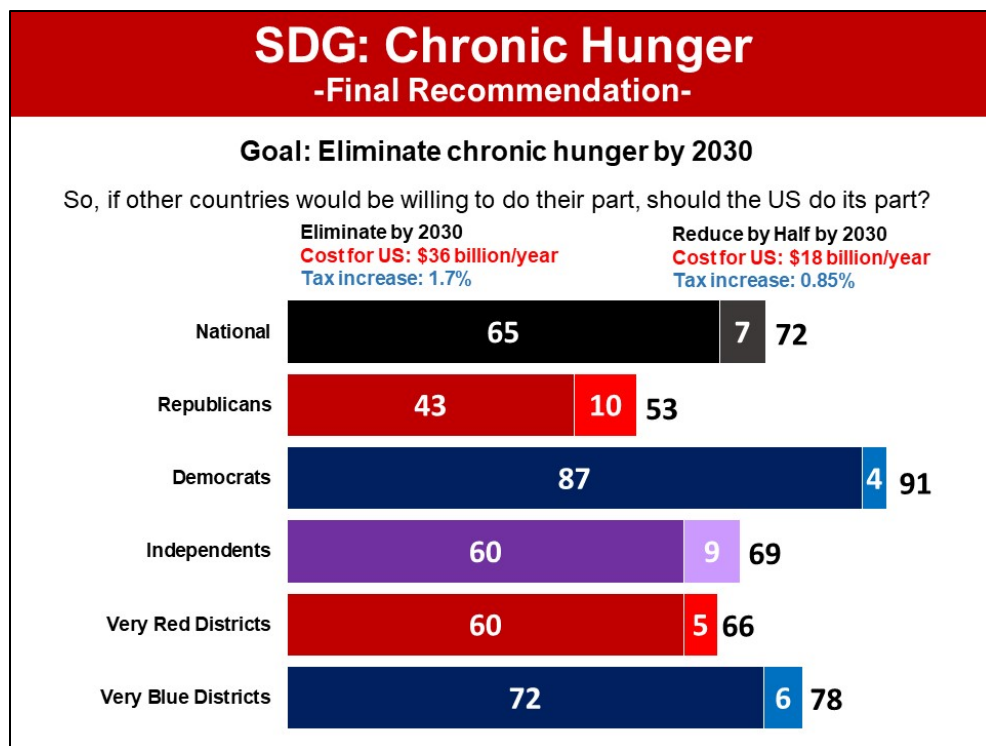
Still, each year about 9 million people die as a result of starvation or hunger-related diseases. Addressing this challenge requires not only providing food directly, but helping to provide farmers with water, access to markets, agricultural equipment, and training in farming methods.

The UN estimates that eliminating nearly all chronic hunger by 2030 would require an additional \$93 billion a year until 2030. This would be for providing food and agricultural development, in addition to other anti-poverty programs. This would mean that 9 million fewer people would die each year.

The US share of this amount would be about \$36 billion. This would require the total of US Federal taxes going up about 1.7%, which means your Federal taxes would go up by 1.7% as well.

Finally, asked whether the US should be willing to contribute an additional \$36 billion to eliminate chronic hunger, if other countries contribute their part, two thirds said the US should, including 87% of Democrats, but just 43% of Republicans.

Those who opposed were asked whether the US should be willing to contribute half its part. Taking into account those willing to contribute the full share, seven in ten recommended the US contribute at least half its part, or \$18 billion a year, including 91% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans.



Universal Access to Clean Water and Sanitation

To help reach the SDG of ensuring universal access to clean drinking water and sanitary toilets, six in ten supported the US contributing its part which was specified as \$42 billion a year and would require a 1.9% increase in federal taxes. This included eight in ten Democrats and four in ten Republicans. A bipartisan majority of seven in ten supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$21 billion, including nine in ten Democrats and a slight majority of Republicans.

The SDG of eliminating chronic hunger was presented as follows:

Another key goal is ensuring access to clean water and a sanitary sewage system.

According to the UN's World Health Organization, 844 million people lack access to clean water, and 4.5 billion people lack a sanitary sewage system. As a result, people living in these conditions suffer

from resulting infections. This results in illness and reduces their ability to work, thus reducing their incomes.

Approximately 500,000 people die each year from illnesses due to lack of clean water and sanitary sewage systems.

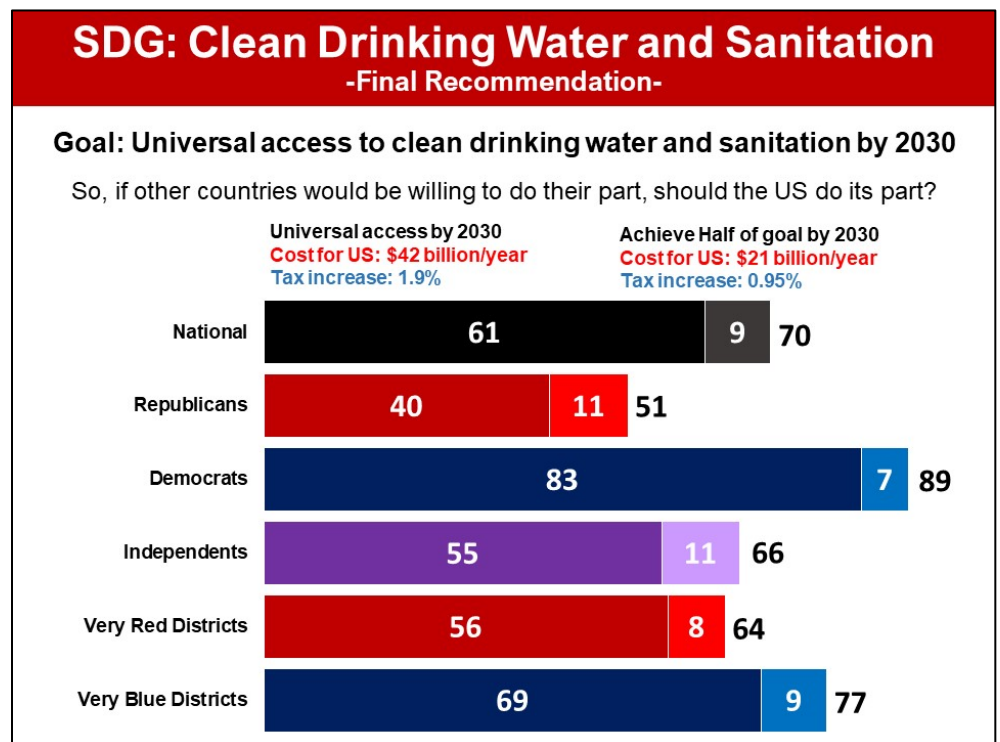
Addressing this challenge requires building dams, water treatment plants, water lines, and sewage systems to purify and distribute water, and to dispose of human waste.

The World Bank estimates that to provide universal access to clean water and sanitary sewage systems would require new commitments of additional \$107 billion a year. This would mean that 500,000 fewer people would die each year.

The US share of this amount would be about \$42 billion. This would require the total of US Federal taxes going up about 1.9%, which means your Federal taxes would go up by 1.9% as well.

Finally, asked whether the US should be willing to contribute an additional \$42 billion to prove universal access to clean water and sanitary sewage systems, if other countries contribute their part, six in ten said the US should, including 83% of Democrats, but just 40% of Republicans.

Those who opposed were asked whether the US should be willing to contribute half its part, or \$21 billion. Taking into account those willing to contribute the full share, seven in ten recommended the US contribute at least half its part, including 89% of Democrats and 51% of Republicans.



Universal Access to Vaccines

To help achieve the SDG of universal access to vaccines, a bipartisan majority of 69% supported the US contributing its part -- \$11 billion a year -- which would require a 0.5% increase in federal taxes. Nearly nine in ten Democrats were in support, as were a bare majority of Republicans. A majority of 77% supported the US contributing at least half its part -- \$5.5 billion -- including over nine in ten Democrats and over six in ten Republicans.

The SDG of providing universal access to vaccines was presented as follows:

Another key challenge is ensuring that every person gets the necessary vaccines, especially children.

Every year, millions of people die from diseases that could have been prevented by vaccinations. In 2017, about 20 million children did not receive regular life-saving vaccinations.

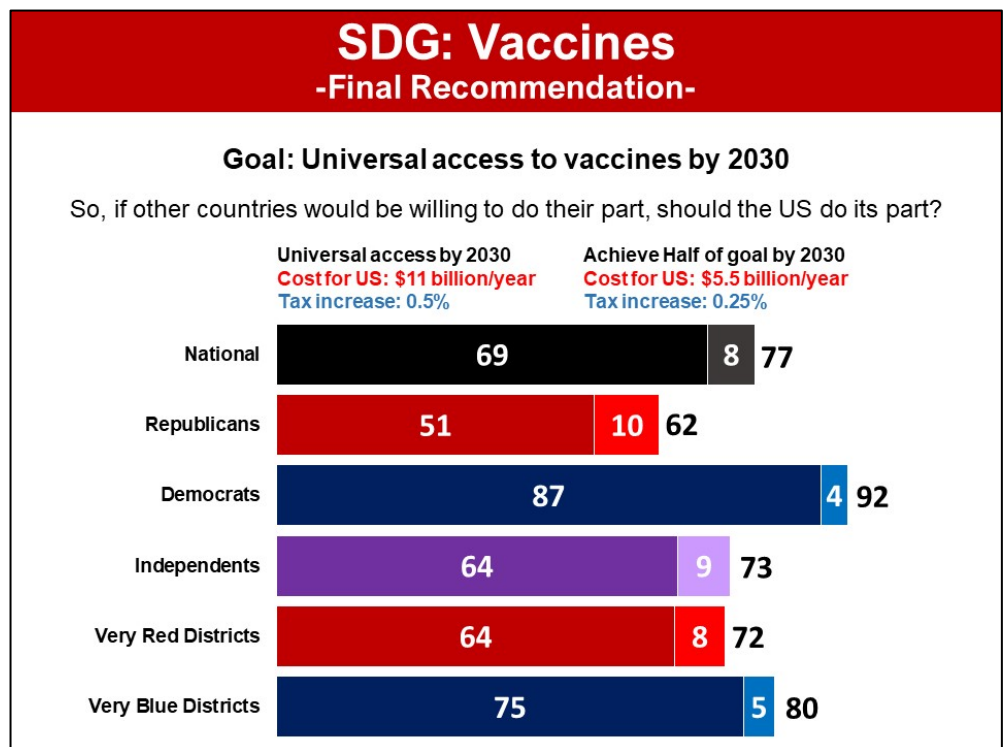
Addressing this challenge requires providing communities with a steady supply of vaccines, getting doctors to areas that need them, and training new healthcare workers.

The World Health Organization estimates that to provide universal access to vaccines will cost an additional \$28 billion a year for ten years. They estimate that this could prevent the deaths of around 10 million people.

The US share of this amount would be about \$11 billion. This would require the total of US Federal taxes going up about 0.5%, which means your Federal taxes would go up by 0.5% as well.

Finally, asked whether the US should be willing to contribute an additional \$11 billion to provide universal access to vaccines, if other countries contribute their part, seven in ten said the US should, including 87% of Democrats and 51% of Republicans.

Those who opposed were asked whether the US should be willing to contribute half its part. Taking into account those willing to contribute the full share, 77% recommended the US contribute at least half its part, or \$5.5 billion a year, including 92% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans.



Universal Access to Education for Children

To help reach the SDG of providing universal access to K-12 education, a majority of 59% supported the US contributing its parts -- \$28 billion a year, which would require a 1.2% increase in federal taxes. This included 84% of Democrats, and 34% of Republicans. A majority of seven in ten supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$14 billion a year, including nine in ten Democrats, and 46% of Republicans.

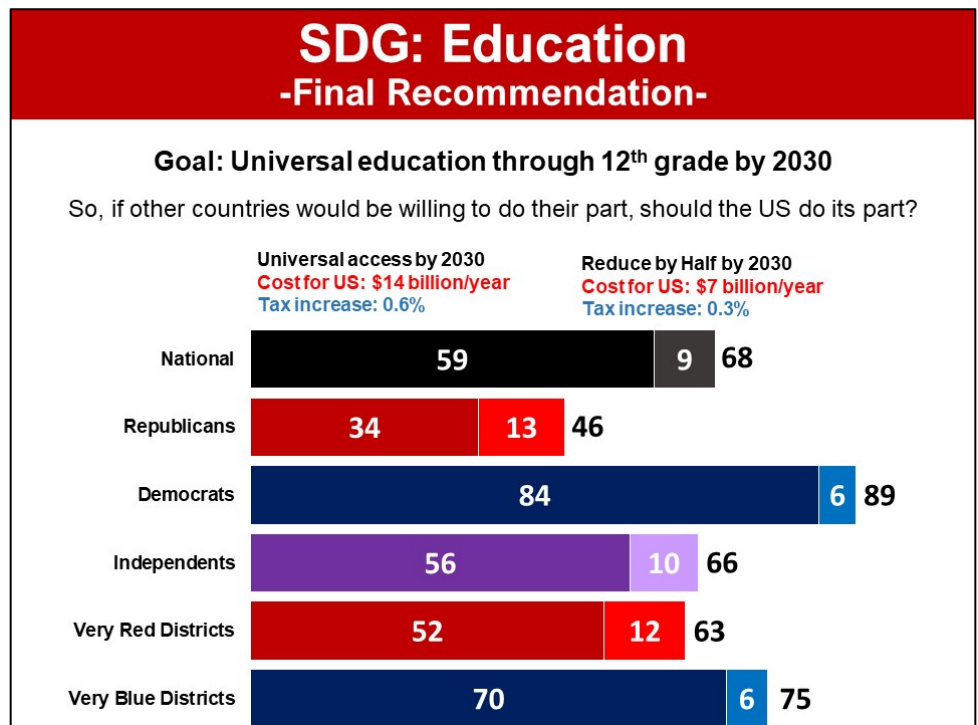
The SDG of providing universal access to K-12 education was presented as follows:

Another key goal is providing education to all children. According to the UN there are about 264 million children who are not receiving education. This stunts their ability to be economically productive for their entire adult lives. Aid for education for children (kindergarten through 12th grade) goes towards building schools, providing educational materials, and training teachers. In the long run, because this would make people more economically productive, it would reduce the amount of hunger and poverty in the world.

The UN estimates that for all children to get education through 12th grade by 2030, high income nations would need to contribute an additional \$39 billion each year. The US share of this amount would be about \$14 billion. This would require the total of US Federal taxes going up about 0.6%, which means your Federal taxes would go up by 0.6% as well.

Finally, asked whether the US should be willing to contribute an additional \$14 billion to provide universal access to K-12 education, if other countries contribute their part, six in ten said the US should, including 84% of Democrats, but just 34% of Republicans.

Those who opposed were asked whether the US should be willing to contribute half its part. Taking into account those willing to contribute the full share, 68% recommended the US contribute at least half its part, or \$7 billion a year, including 89% of Democrats. Less than half of Republicans (46%) favored giving at least half.



Universal Access to Energy

To help reach the SDG of providing universal access to energy, primarily electricity, 53% supported the US contributing its parts -- \$13 billion a year, which would require a 0.6% increase in federal taxes. This included 76% of Democrats and just 28% of Republicans. A majority of 63% supported the US contributing at least half its part or \$6.5 billion a year, including 85% of Democrats and four in ten Republicans.

The SDG of providing universal access to energy, primarily electricity was presented as follows:

Another key challenge is providing access to energy, primarily electricity. According to the World Bank, one billion people live without access to electricity. Gaining access to electricity is a major factor in reducing hunger, improving health, and eliminating poverty. Electric stoves reduce the use of unhealthy and environmentally harmful fuels, lighting enables children to study and connectivity enables more efficient economic production, especially for farmers.

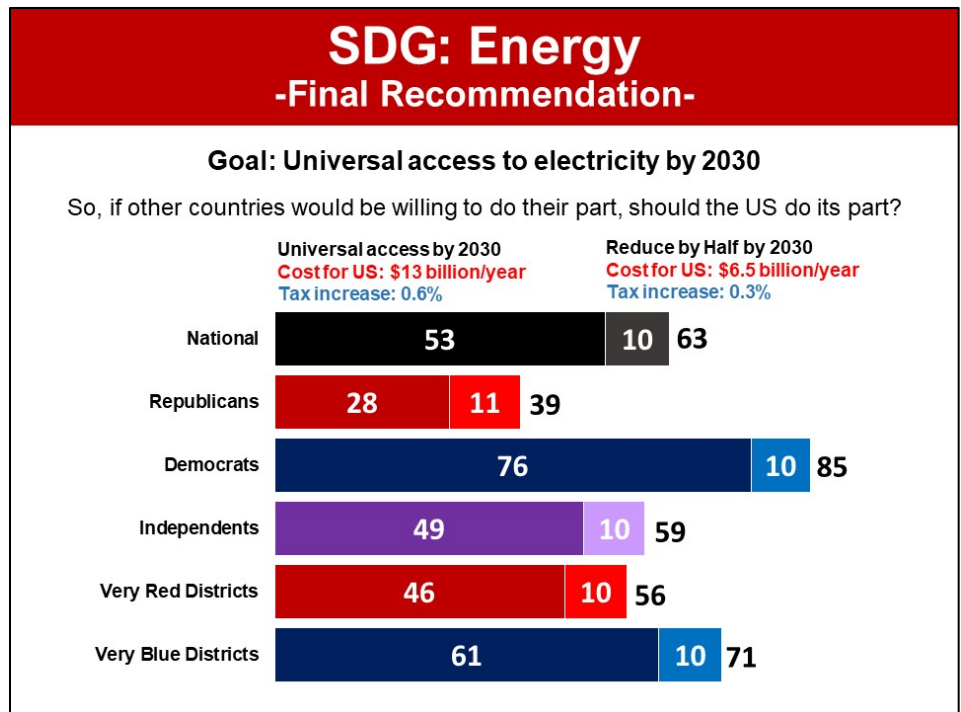
Aid for energy goes towards building power plants (especially ones using renewable sources such as solar,) and electrical distribution grids; and training professionals to maintain these systems.

A World Bank report found that to provide access to electricity for everybody in the world by 2030 would require \$34 billion a year.

The US share of this amount would be about \$13 billion. This would require the total of US Federal taxes going up about 0.6%, which means your Federal taxes would go up by 0.6% as well.

Finally, asked whether the US should be willing to contribute an additional \$13 billion to provide universal access to energy, if other countries contribute their part, a modest majority of 53% said the US should, including three in four Democrats, and just over a quarter of Republicans.

Those who opposed were asked whether the US should be willing to contribute half its part. Taking into account those willing to contribute the full share, 63% recommended the US contribute at least half its part, or \$6.5 billion a year, including 85% of Democrats. Just four in ten Republicans favored giving at least half.





PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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